



## Iranian president urges OIC to help avert attack on Iraq

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has urged the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to help defuse the Iraqi weapons crisis, the official news agency IRNA said Friday.

President Khatami, in a meeting with OIC Secretary General Ezzeddine Laraki, called for cooperation between the OIC and other international organisations to "resolve problems in the Islamic World,

particularly Iraq."

"Given the imminent disaster faced by Iraq, it is expected that negotiations will be started with the parties involved in the stand-off in order to resolve the crisis in Iraq and avert the danger," Mr. Khatami said.

Mr. Laraki arrived Wednesday in Tehran to discuss the crisis in Iraq and he has already held two rounds of talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi.

Iran, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the OIC, has said it is opposed to a military strike on Iraq. The OIC on Sunday called for diplomatic efforts to end the tense showdown between Iraq and the United Nations over weapons inspections.

It has called on the United Nations to "spare no effort to encourage all parties concerned to show restraint, avoid recourse to force, and favour a diplomatic solution to the crisis."

The United States has threatened to attack Iraq over its refusal to allow U.N. arms inspectors to check so-called presidential sites.

The inspectors' mission is to verify whether Iraq has eliminated its weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles, the condition for lifting the U.N. embargo imposed on Iraq in 1990 after it invaded Kuwait.

## French presidential envoy arrives in Damascus for talks on Iraq

DAMASCUS (AFP) — A French presidential envoy touring the Middle East in a bid to find a diplomatic solution to the Iraq weapons crisis arrived in Damascus on Friday from Cairo, diplomats said.

Bertrand Dufourcq, the director general of the French foreign ministry, is due to hold talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharara before heading for Riyadh and Kuwait City.

During his short stay in Egypt, Mr. Dufourcq held talks on Thursday night with Egyptian Foreign Minister

Amr Musa, but refused to comment to reporters.

"I have no comment, I'm going to give my report to President (Jacques) Chirac," he said, adding that he would not return to Baghdad.

"I think that a certain number of ideas have made progress, of course, but we need to continue to work very seriously," he said earlier Thursday in Baghdad before leaving for Egypt.

Mr. Dufourcq met with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad and gave him a message from President Chirac.

Meanwhile, the French foreign ministry's chief for Middle East and North African affairs, Jean-Claude Cousseran, was expected to arrive in Amman Sunday night for talks with senior Jordanian officials on the Iraqi situation.

Mr. Cousseran, who had accompanied Mr. Dufourcq to Baghdad, "is coming to Amman to find out the Jordanian authorities' position and views on the crisis," a French diplomat in Jordan said.

Mr. Dufourcq held talks in Amman Tuesday with HRH Crown Prince Hassan before going to Baghdad.

## Palestinian situation 'explosive' — Arafat

MADRID (AFP) — Yasser Arafat has warned that the atmosphere in the Middle East is "explosive" and that Palestinians are running out of patience with the failures of the peace process.

The Palestinian leader's remarks were carried in an interview published Friday by the Spanish daily, El Pais, following a one-day official visit to Spain.

"The Palestinian situation is explosive," Mr. Arafat told the paper.

"Our people are asking us: 'Is this the peace that was ratified during the last elections?'" he said, accusing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of "freezing the peace process."



MEMORIAL FOR QANA VICTIMS: Fatima Nateq-Nouri, wife of Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, and Randa Berri, wife of Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, place a wreath Friday at the mass grave of some 100 civilians who were killed in the southern Lebanese village of Qana in an Israeli artillery shelling of a U.N. base in April 1996. Mr. Nateq-Nouri arrived here Thursday on an official three-day visit (AP photo)

## Lebanese rebel leader's case to go before highest judicial authority

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon's cabinet handed the case of Hizbollah dissident leader Sobhi Tufaili to the country's highest judicial body, whose verdicts cannot be overturned, officials said.

The cabinet adopted Lebanese President Elias Hrawi's proposal to turn the matter over to the Justice Council, which is com-

posed of a president, four permanent judges and a prosecutor.

Despite a military siege of Sheikh Tufaili's birthplace, Bital village, and searches of nearby Duris, where his home is located, the dissident leader who was expelled from the Hizbollah movement last month is still at large.

Lebanese state prosecu-

tors have called for Sheikh Tufaili's arrest "on charges of forming armed groups, endangering national security and killing soldiers and civilians."

Eight people, including Sheikh Tufaili's key aide, Khodr Tlaiss, and three Lebanese army soldiers, died Jan. 30 in Baalbek, Lebanon, when soldiers stormed a Hizbollah reli-

gious school that had been taken over by Sheikh Tufaili and 20 armed followers.

Sheikh Tufaili served as Hizbollah's first secretary general from 1985 to 1987. He was stripped of any official position after opposing the leadership's decision to take part in Lebanon's 1992 legislative elections.

## Turkish army chief meets Israeli defence minister

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The commander of Turkey's ground forces, General Hussein Kivrikoglu, met Thursday with Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai to discuss furthering the already extensive military cooperation between the two countries, officials said.

Gen. Kivrikoglu arrived in Israel Tuesday and has also met with Israeli army chief of staff, Amnon Lipkin Shahak, and officials in the Israeli air force and logistics and technology branches of the military, an army spokesman said.

Mr. Mordechai spoke of the "warmth of the two countries' relations" and emphasised "Israel's desire to strengthen them further."

On the Iraqi crisis over U.N. arms inspections, a

spokesman quoted Mr. Mordechai as saying that the Jewish state "is coordinating with the United States but that Israel has no intention of getting involved in a confrontation."

The Turkish general was scheduled to return home Friday.

Mr. Mordechai met with Gen. Kivrikoglu during a visit to Turkey in November, when the Israeli minister lobbied Ankara to purchase Israel's advanced Merkava III battle tank.

Israel is competing with four other countries to win a lucrative contract to supply the Turkish army with thousands of tanks.

If Israel wins, it will be the first foreign sale of the Merkava; and the deal was expected to be high on the

agenda of Gen. Kivrikoglu's meetings here.

Israel and Turkey, a secular state with a majority Muslim population, signed a military cooperation agreement in 1996 which has drawn sharp criticism from Arab states, Iran and Greece.

Under the military pact, Israel has won contracts worth several hundred million dollars to upgrade Turkey's airforce and the two nations' navies participated in joint naval manoeuvres alongside U.S. ships in the eastern Mediterranean last month.

Neighbouring states, particularly Syria and Iran, say the growing Israeli-Turkish military relationship represents a threat to their security.

## Israeli border police expelled for beating three Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Two Israeli border policemen are to be expelled from their corps and prosecuted for beating up three Palestinian teenagers, police said Thursday.

The three boys, aged 13, were detained in Jerusalem on Wednesday, punched and kicked inside a moving police van and then thrown out of it in a nearby wood, police spokeswoman Linda Menuhin said.

One had been beaten unconscious and was later revived, she said.

The Palestinians, who apparently were detained for illegal peddling, complained at a nearby police station.

The border police are a paramilitary arm of the Israeli police force, with a reputation for toughness in their dealings with the Palestinians. Some of its members are young men doing the three years of military service compulsory in Israel.

The two are to be expelled

from the border police, transferred to the army, and prosecuted on criminal charges. Ms. Menuhin said.

On Sunday the commander of the border police, Jacques Dadon, is to address a gathering of all the officers in the force on the need to prevent ill-treatment of Palestinians.

In a related development, the Israeli army's top general in the West Bank, Major General Uzi Dayan, has ordered officers to toughen penalties against soldiers who mistreat Palestinians.

Maj. Gen. Dayan issued the order following an increase in the number of complaints from Palestinians, the army spokesman said.

In one recent incident, the commander of Israeli forces in the tense and divided West Bank city of Hebron jailed two soldiers for a week for smashing a Palestinian's window and urinating in his courtyard.

## Israeli Christian school closes over Islamic headscarf conflict

AKKO (AFP) — A Christian Arab school in this northern Israeli city has suspended classes for fear of violence over a dispute as to whether a student may wear the Islamic headscarf, Israeli television said Thursday.

The girl, who was suspended by the Terra Sancta school for wearing the headscarf, is

appealing to the Israeli Supreme Court for the right to attend classes with her head covered.

The school, which has 600 students, closed its doors temporarily Tuesday after threats were made against the administration.

The television station quoted the school's director as

saying, "There is total freedom of belief at our establishment, but all the students must have the same uniforms."

He added the school opposed the wearing of the headscarf.

A significant number of students in Israel's Christian schools are Muslims.

## Sheikh Yassin postpones medical trip after aides denied travel papers

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, spiritual leader of Hamas, suspended plans to seek medical treatment abroad after Israel denied travel permits to four aides, Hamas officials said on Friday.

Sheikh Yassin, 61, was to have travelled this month to Egypt and Saudi Arabia for treatment to restore hearing to his one deaf

ear and to end an ear infection which doctors fear could spread to his brain, Hamas officials said.

"Sheikh Yassin will not leave as long as Israel prohibits his four assistants from accompanying him," said Abdul Aziz Al Rantissi, a Hamas spokesman who was one of those denied travel permits by Israel. Mr. Rantissi

called on the PNA to intervene in the matter with Israel, which maintains control over all international transit points into the Palestinian areas. Sheikh Yassin has received a diplomatic passport from the PNA, allowing him to move more freely through Israeli-controlled border crossings into the occupied territories.

## Turkey says 40 killed in Kurdish clash

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Turkish security officials said on Friday that 37 Kurdish rebels and three Turkish soldiers were killed in an all-day clash near the Syrian border.

Security officials said the

clash broke out on Thursday when the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels ambushed troops in the south-eastern province of Mardin. The army called in support and fighting lasted into the night, the offi-

cials said.

More than 27,000 people have been killed in the 13-year-old conflict between Turkish security forces and the PKK, fighting for Kurdish self-rule.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19 PROGRAMME TWO	
16:10	Twinkle
16:30	French Programmes
18:00	Square One TV
18:30	Neighbours
19:00	Le Journal
19:15	Documentary
19:30	News headlines
19:35	You Bet Your Life
20:00	Cinema, Cinema
20:30	Prism
21:10	Time Trax
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film: "Miller and Mueller"
23:15	Comedy

PRAYER TIMES	
05:03	Fajr
06:22	(Sunrise) Dhuha
11:50	Dhuhr
14:51	'Asr
17:18	Maghreb
18:37	Isha

CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Swoffish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.	632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656	

Terra Sancta Church Tel.	622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	623541
Anglican Church Tel. 652826	Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.	775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel.	771751
Armenian International Church Tel.	865897
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.	824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457	The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.	614190

WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	Under the effect of a cold air mass accompanied by a depression affecting the Kingdom, there will be a gradual drop in temperatures with
Min/Max temp.	Amman .....06/12
Aqaba .....10/26	Deserts .....06/08

clouds building up at different altitudes. Rainfall is expected in the northern parts of the Kingdom gradually extending to all other parts and winds southwesterly active. On Sunday, it will be cold, skies cloudy to partly cloudy, rainy, and winds southerly active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, rainy, winds southerly moderate, and seas choppy.	
Min/Max temp.	Amman .....06/12
Aqaba .....10/26	Deserts .....06/08

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
Food Control Centre .....637111	Civil Defence Department .....566111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630341	Civil Defence Emergency .....199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777	Fire Brigade .....617101
Blood Bank .....775121	Highway Police .....843402
Traffic Police .....896390	Public Security Department .....630321
Hotel Complaints .....5605800	Price Complaints .....5661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints .....897467	Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111

Ferdows pharmacy .....778336	Al Asema pharmacy .....637055
Nairookh pharmacy .....632672	Al Salam pharmacy .....636730
Yacoub pharmacy .....644945	Shmeisani pharmacy .....637660
Najib pharmacy .....847632	IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh .....250080	Al Quds pharmacy .....(-)
ZARQA:	Dr. Samir Lawzi .....989601
Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417	

EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre .....637111	Civil Defence Department .....566111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630341	Civil Defence Emergency .....199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777	Fire Brigade .....617101
Blood Bank .....775121	Highway Police .....843402
Traffic Police .....896390	Public Security Department .....630321
Hotel Complaints .....5605800	Price Complaints .....5661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints .....897467	Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111

HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	Hussein Medical Centre .....813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	.....644281/6
Alkaleh Maternity, J. Amn	.....642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	.....642362
Malhas, J. Amman	.....636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	.....5607071
Shmeisani Hospital	.....5669131
University Hospital	.....845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	.....566722/9
The Islamic, Abdali	.....5666126/37

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information	
Al-Ahli, Abdali	.....566416/6
Italian, Al-Muhajireen	.....777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafiah	.....775111/25
Army, Marka	.....891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	.....560240/50
Amal Hospital	.....5674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	.....865199
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	.....09/983323
Zarqa National Hospital	.....09/900560
Ibn Sina Hospital	.....09/986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital	.....09/990990
IRBID:	
Princess Basma Hospital	.....02/275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	.....02/272755
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital	.....02/247100
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	.....03/314111

ARRIVALS	
department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250.	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	
08:25	Damascus (RJ)
09:00	Aqaba (add) (RJ)
09:30	New Delhi (RJ)
09:55	Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05	Beirut (RJ)
10:15	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:50	Colombo (RJ)
15:00	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20	Cairo (RJ)
17:40	London, Berlin (RJ)
19:55	Frankfurt (RJ)
05:15	Bangkok (RJ)

DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	
06:30	Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:30	Beirut (RJ)
10:10	Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00	Milan Madrid (RJ)
12:00	Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
12:10	Paris (RJ)
12:15	London (RJ)
12:30	Cairo (RJ)
20:05	Riyadh, Dhabran (RJ)
20:15	Bombay (RJ)
20:20	Larnaca (RJ)
20:30	Jeddah (RJ)
21:00	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights	
07:00	Beirut (ME)
10:30	Al Arish (Marka Airport) (PF)
14:15	Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:45	Riyadh (SV)
15:50	Vienna (OS)
19:00	Dubai (EK)
23:35	Cairo (MS)
23:55	Damascus: Paris (AF)
00:35	Amsterdam (KL)
03:00	Athens (AZ)
04:20	Rome (OA)



## Majali asks planning ministry to settle ownership of refugee camp land

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has sent a letter to the Ministry of Planning asking it to settle the problem of the ownership of the land on which refugee camps are built before it implements the Social Productivity Programme (SPP), a plan to improve the living standards of citizens in the underdeveloped regions of Jordan, according to a report by Al Arab Al Yawm daily newspaper.

In 1995, the Court of Cassation ruled that some

of the land on which Al Hussein Refugee Camp is built belonged to individuals and should therefore be evacuated as demanded by the owners.

However, despite the court ruling, the government said it would not evict the tens of thousands of residents of the camp.

Meanwhile, a study by the Ministry of Planning estimated that the SPP will cost JD431 million, with the first three-year phase costing JD150 million.

Projects in the initial stage will involve 14 sites in Amman, Russeifa and Zarqa.

The programme is also geared towards improving the standard of living of residents in villages and rural regions by improving roads, schools, electricity and water services.

The SPP entails restructuring the National Aid Fund, which provides assistance to the poor, providing underprivileged areas with physical and social infrastructure, improving the operations of the micro-finance network to strengthen income capacity and providing training to the poor and unemployed.

The government has estimated that unemployment

stands at 15 per cent, while a survey conducted by the Centre of Strategic Studies showed that the rate of unemployment in Jordan is at 27 per cent.

According to the report, out of the total cost of JD431 million, JD64 million will be allocated to develop regions that have no zoning or planning, JD173 million for refugee camps, JD145 million for local councils, JD33 million for the infrastructure of small productive projects and JD16 million for research studies, technical surveys and training.

## CAA chief expresses reservations over joint Jordanian-Israeli airport operation

AQABA (Petra) — The director of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Jasser Ziyad, has expressed Jordan's reservations over the joint Jordanian-Israeli operations of the Aqaba airport during a four-month trial period which began last November.

Speaking at a meeting held here Thursday and attended by Jordanian and Israeli officials to assess the trial operation, Capt. Ziyad said that while the agreement with the Israelis stipulated that they would operate between 15 and 20 flights a week to the airport, they only operated three a week during the

trial period.

At the meeting, a general review was made of the steps taken to organise the joint operations at the airport, with the Israeli side expressing satisfaction with the services offered by the Jordanian authorities.

Capt. Ziyad, who led the Jordanian team to the meeting, said that in view of this situation, there is no alternative to completing the trial period in order to check on the technical and administrative readiness of the airport and to give chance for additional flights to be conducted before a permanent timetable can be drawn.

He said the two sides have scheduled another meeting in the coming few weeks to conduct an assessment.

The Israelis have promised to recommend that additional flights be made through the airport, he added.

The Israeli team was led by the director of the Israeli prime minister's office.

Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) President Marwan Aduin, who chaired the meeting, outlined plans for developing the Aqaba region and the Aqaba airport's contribution to such development.

## Ad agents critical of higher commercial rates

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Radio and Television Corporation hiked the prices of commercials by up to four times previous rates and wrote off discounts on commercials for local products in a move effective as of Feb. 1, according to the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm.

Advertising agents described the need for higher commercial prices as "imaginary," stating that they were listed without thoroughly studying the local market's conditions.

Factory owners and local corporations will be adversely affected by these hikes since they rely in great deal on marketing their products through radio and television commercials, the agents said.

The agents pointed out that foreign trademarks were not harmed by such a decision, since their commercials are financed by foreign companies. Therefore, these industries will be the sole beneficiaries from this hike in prices, they added.

They called on the concerned parties to reconsider their decision and conduct a scientific study for commercials and the local market's conditions.

The agents said that the old pricing list was better and much more realistic than the new one, since it relied on the time of broadcasting commercials.

"The old list divided the time of broadcasting commercials into four areas: from 10 a.m. to 5:29 p.m., from 5:30 p.m. to 7:29 p.m., from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., and from 10 p.m. to the end of transmission," said the agents.

According to the new list, the price of a 30-second commercial during the News at Eight will be JD150, JD200 during broadcasts on Fridays at 8 p.m., and JD500 during other news broadcasts.

## Regent receives message to King on Jordanian-Algerian relations

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Thursday received a verbal message from Algerian President Liamine Zeroual addressed to His Majesty King Hussein on Jordanian-Algerian relations.

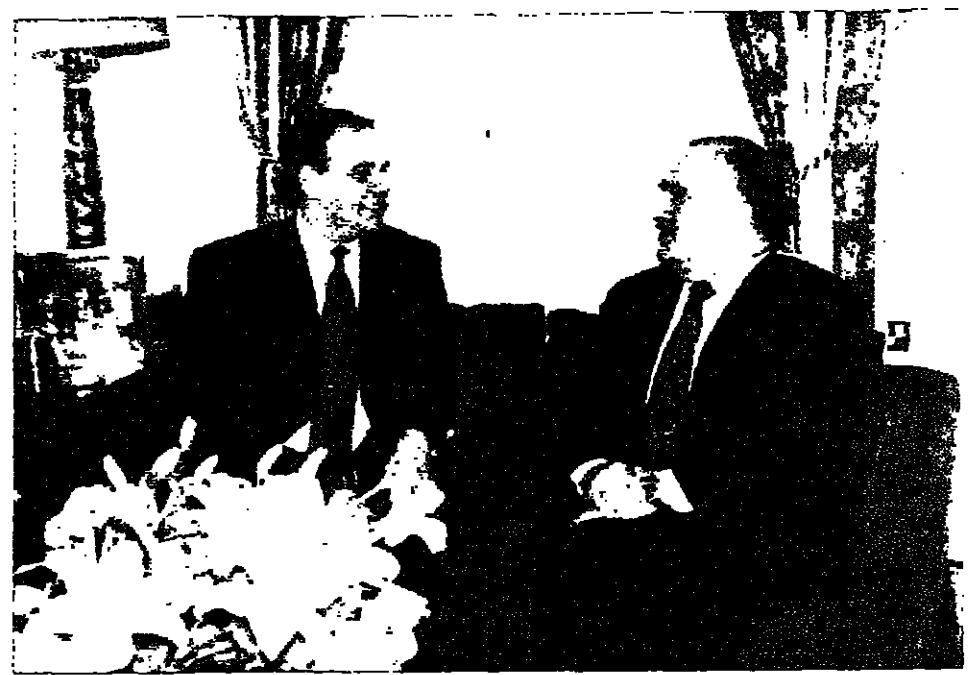
Prince Hassan voiced Jordan's support for the Algerian people in dealing with their present ordeal and the current circumstances in Algeria.

The message was delivered to the Regent at the Royal Court by Algerian Minister of Telecommunications and Culture Hamrawi Habib Shawqi, who also discussed current efforts to contain the U.N.-Iraq crisis with Prince Hassan.

The Regent reiterated Jordan's call for a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The Algerian minister voiced his country's appreciation for Jordan's support for the Algerian people and praised the existing strong and close ties between the two countries.

Earlier Thursday, Mr. Shawqi and Jordanian Minister of Culture and Youth



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Thursday discusses bilateral relations with visiting Algerian Minister of Telecommunications and Culture Hamrawi Habib Shawqi (Photo by Boghos)

Qassem Abu Ein signed an executive programme for implementing a scientific and cultural agreement between Algeria and Jordan through the year 2000.

Under the 13-article programme, the two countries agree to exchange visits by

experts in cultural heritage, encourage joint research in culture, exchange books and publications on historic documents, and organise bilateral annual cultural seasons.

The programme also paves the way for cooperation

between art-related institutions in Algeria and Jordan, joint cinema production, and archaeological restoration programmes.

Mr. Shawqi also met with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Bittaji to discuss tourism affairs.

## Amman, Irbid police searching for parties responsible for three weekend murders

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police on Friday said they are searching for the assailants involved in three murders that occurred in the Kingdom over the weekend.

The first murder claimed the life of Salem Salameh, a 75-year-old shepherd, whose body was found Thursday in a valley in the Ma'adi neighbourhood in the Qweisneh area.

Mr. Salameh was shot once in the back and received a head injury caused by a blunt object, investigators determined. The assailant also set the victim on fire after the murder.

Also Thursday, police found a Sri Lankan woman

shot dead in Jabal Weibdeh on the stairs leading to Wadi Saqr.

The victim, who was not identified by the authorities, received three bullet wounds to the head.

"We are still investigating the murders, and have not officially charged anyone with any of the murders, but we have good evidence that will lead us to the killers," a police official told the Jordan Times Friday.

Meanwhile, police in Irbid have apprehended one of two suspects in connection with the murder of a woman in Barha town, according to official sources.

The victim, Da'ed Ramadan, was found dead by her daughter upon

returning home from work Friday.

Coroners attributed Ms. Ramadan's death to strangulation. They said the woman also suffered from bruises to her head caused by a blunt object.

According to officials, preliminary investigations indicated that theft was the motive behind the murder.

The sources added that one of the two men held by police has confessed to the murder.

The 25-year-old suspect said he entered the house with another man with the intent to rob the house, hit the woman, who was alone, with an iron bar, then strangled her with a sheet.

Police contacted by the Jordan Times on Friday evening said they were still

investigating the incident. Meanwhile, Aqaba police Friday apprehended the person who killed a 24-year-old woman in the Al Shamiyyeh area of the city, five kilometres from Aqaba, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The crime was committed Thursday by a man named as S.G.S., who accompanied the victim, named as M.M.A., to Al Shamiyyeh area, where he committed the murder, the report said.

Colonel Abdul Rahman Kharabshah, Aqaba police director, said the killer confessed before the prosecutor general that he committed the murder by shooting five bullets into the victim before fleeing the scene.

## Two Egyptian nationals sentenced to death for May 1997 murder

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court on Thursday sentenced two Egyptian nationals to death after they were found guilty of robbing and killing a colleague in Ajloun in May 1997.

The court tribunal found Nadi Ali, 32, and Mabrouk Mire, 28, guilty of the premeditated murder of Subhi Dakhel, 40, also an Egyptian national, at a stone mill in the Ra's Munif area of Ajloun on May 2.

According to court documents, the two defendants plotted to rob and kill Mr. Dakhel because they were suffering from financial problems and knew that the victim owned some money.

On the night of the murder, court transcripts said, the two brought a sledgehammer, went to the victim's room and called on him to come out because they wanted to discuss a matter with him.

"When Mr. Dakhel went out, Mr. Mire struck him on the head with the sledge-

hammer, pulled him into room, searched him and took JD150," the court said. "When Mr. Ali saw that the Mr. Dakhel did not die, he struck him again with the sledgehammer until he made sure he was dead, then the two fled the scene," the court added.

The following morning, the two returned to the scene of crime and buried the victim under a tree at the mill.

The two were apprehended by the authorities after the mill owner learned

about the matter and informed the police.

The court said it relied on the defendants' confessions and testimonies from other witnesses.

The verdict, handed down by Justices Marwan Dabbas, Ibrahim Ali and Sami Karaki, will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

The two sentences Thursday brings the total number of people sentenced to death in the Kingdom since the beginning of the year to four.

## Jordanian playwright wins Euro-Mediterranean competition

By Jumana Abu Hanoud  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian theatre director and playwright Najeh Abu Zein has won the 1997 Euro-Mediterranean Competition for Young Writers "Joining Sea" award for his script "Intersection Area" and will travel to Italy to receive his prize at an official ceremony in June.

Mr. Abu Zein's piece took the prize out of the 219 scripts from 20 countries submitted to the competition, which was organised by the European Council for the Countries of the Mediterranean.

As the winning script, "Intersection Area" will be published in both English and Italian and distributed worldwide by the organisers of the competition. According to Mr. Abu Zein, this is an important step for Jordan due to the instability of the artistic movement, and "the absence of organised institutional efforts and the lack of recognition of young people's efforts and accomplishments."

He explained that the script stresses the necessity of universal unity and intercommunication.

"It is an attempt to create a highly transparent and



Najeh Abu Zein

acted, dramatised scenes and written scripts for several theatre and television productions, and also completed several theatre courses in the U.K. and the U.S.

Mr. Abu Zein has won several awards for his work, including gold and silver medals at the 1997 Cairo International Contest for Radio and Television for his work in the television programme "The Magic Lantern" and the script of the musical production "Madinat Al Sawana," respectively. He also won a silver medal at the 1997 Tunis International Contest.

Mr. Abu Zein said he hopes that his play will affect the attitudes of a large number of the younger audience worldwide who can identify and sympathise with the script's plea for universal cultural communication and unity.

"I plan to go on presenting contributions in both writing and directing that will deal with human issues and problems, and trigger a literary and human dialogue that will enlighten people and be immortalised in souls and memories," he said.

HRH Princess Wijdan and Senator Leila Sharaf both congratulated Mr. Abu Zein on winning the award.

He said the two sides have scheduled another meeting in the coming few weeks to conduct an assessment.

The agents said that the old pricing list was better and much more realistic than the new one, since it relied on the time of broadcasting commercials.

"The old list divided the time of broadcasting commercials into four areas: from 10 a.m. to 5:29 p.m., from 5:30 p.m. to 7:29 p.m., from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., and from 10 p.m. to the end of transmission," said the agents.

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## JEA blocs discussing possibility of common agenda for elections

By Hind-Lara Mango  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two rival blocs in the 38,000-strong Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) are still in talks to agree on a common agenda for elections later this month to choose a new president, a deputy and a seven-seat ruling council.

However, observers said the talks between the Islamists (white bloc) and leftists and pan-Arabists (green bloc) on a unified stand for the Feb. 27 elections have been hampered by major disagreements on their concept of a common agenda.

The historic rivals put aside their ideological differences last December and formed an alliance to choose members for the JEA's seven engineering branches and confront plans to change laws governing the operations of the country's 12 professional associations.

The common list scored massive gains in last year's elections, winning 44 of the 49 seats in the seven engi-

neering branches. "For the past six weeks we have been discussing means of reaching an agreement with the whites," said leading nationalist Abdul Rahman Bitar, one of three nationalist candidates vying for the JEA presidency and deputy seat.

He told the Jordan Times that even though there have been no concrete results, the debate for a common agenda will continue.

Observers believe that the white bloc will once again dominate the results of the elections. Islamist and JEA deputy Hosni Abu Ghaida is expected to win the two-year JEA presidency, while his ally Azzam Huneidi, who is pushing for a unified agenda, is expected to take the seat of deputy.

The white bloc, headed by present JEA deputy Mr. Abu Ghaida, has proposed two seats for the greens in the council of seven engineering branches.

"I don't think that at this stage there is any hope for a unified agenda," he

said, adding that the Islamists will now run for ten seats out of the ten vacancies for the seven branches, the presidency and the post of deputy.

But members of the nationalist bloc say that the number of seats allocated to them is irrelevant.

"When we talk of a unified list, we are not talking about a symbolic agenda with two or three seats for the greens, but about active political and professional participation," Mr. Bitar said.

He added that a number of members from both groupings have opposed a unified agenda for the upcoming elections.

Candidates on the green list will run for six branches and for the seat of president and deputy of the JEA, he said.

The whites have had a strong hold on the majority seats in the JEA during the last three terms. In the 1970's and up to 1989, nationalists and pan-Arabists had run the association.

The professional associations have come increasingly under fire from the government for what it sees as an unneeded political role of the unions.

In a recent interview with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, he told the Jordan Times that the associations should focus on professional concerns instead of politics, after Jordan legalised political parties in 1992.

"Since we have political parties, then political issues should be dealt with by these parties and not by the professional associations," he said.

The government has announced it may introduce a new associations law, but has said little about the details.

The opposition fears that the new law may include voluntary membership, which would reduce the number of members in the associations and dilute their strength. Others have said the government might appoint managers to run each association as part of efforts to "de-politicise" them.

Mr. Huneidi, spokesperson for the Islamists at the JEA, told the Jordan Times that what had motivated his

bloc and the nationalists to join forces in December was the feeling that they had to mobilise the greatest number of engineers to defend the cause of the associations.

Around 3,400 engineers out of a total membership of 39,000 members cast their ballots in the December 1997 elections. Officials and unionists who oppose the idea of compulsory membership in the associations said the lacklustre support in the ballot reflected voter apathy regarding the long-politicised unions, which they maintain have failed to improve the standard of the profession.

Turnout for the coming elections is expected to be low according to Mr. Abu Ghaida. "I expect that out of the 10,000 engineers who have paid the JD30 membership fees, only 6,000 will cast ballots at the end of this month."

A general assembly for the JEA will be held in two weeks, paving the way for the elections to be held later this month.

## what's going on

### FILM

\* Video film (in English) on studying at German universities (parts 1 and 11) at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman on Sunday Feb. 8, at 4:30 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

\* Valentine's Day bazaar at Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqr Street (Tel. 699141/2), until Feb. 14.

\* Private collection of Mamdouh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until March 5 (Tel. 643251). Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."

\* "History of Cartoon Drawings" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Feb. 26.

\* Works by about a hundred artists from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Feb. 20 (Tel. 5536098).

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## German upper house approves bugging law

BONN (R) — Germany's Upper House of Parliament approved Friday a controversial constitutional amendment that would restore police surveillance powers outlawed since the Nazi era.

The amendment, much criticised by civil rights groups, will give police broad eavesdropping powers withheld in after the war as a reaction to the arbitrary rule of Hitler's secret police, the Gestapo.

The Bundesrat, made up of representatives from Germany's state governments, narrowly approved the amendment, which was endorsed by the Lower House in January. The law will take effect as soon as it is published within the next few weeks.

"The citizens of this country are demanding a signal from you that we are prepared to defend our country that is based on the rule of law against crimi-

nals," Justice Minister Edzard Schmidt-Jortzig said in a speech to the Upper House before the vote. "This law is such a signal," he added.

The two-thirds majority needed to pass the measure was only achieved after the tiny city-state of Bremen agreed to cast its three votes in the 69-seat Upper House in favour.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) have long pushed for the amendment as an important crime-fighting tool and reached a deal with the opposition social democrats last month. But the environmentalist Greens were staunchly opposed.

Five states where the SPD and greens share power abstained from the vote Friday. Bremen is governed by a grand coalition of SPD and CDU.

In exchange for its vote, Bremen won a promise that

a mediating committee would be called in to examine ways to expand the law so that an exemption would include journalists, physicians and attorneys.

As it currently stands, the law exempts only priests in confessionals and parliamentary deputies from bugging.

The measure allows police to eavesdrop over an extended period on private homes using sophisticated surveillance devices such as directional microphones linked to transmitters.

Electronic surveillance is currently only allowed in Germany if there is an overwhelming suspicion that a crime is on the verge of being committed.

Police say they want the powers to fight a surge in organised crime but lawyers, journalists and doctors have condemned the bill as a violation of Germany's post-war constitutional right to privacy.



Social Democratic party leader Oskar Lafontaine (left) addresses Germany's upper house of parliament as Lower-Saxony's Social Democratic State Premier Gerhard Schroeder (right) listens, after the upper house approved a controversial amendment to the constitution that would restore police powers of surveillance outlawed since the Nazi era (Reuters photo)

## Another 'grand fudge' as Indian voters get promised the moon

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's main parties have yet again "promised the moon" to voters before upcoming elections, while carefully leaving out all detail of how they will achieve it, analysts say.

The manifestos of the three main contenders for power — the Hindu nationalists, the Congress and the outgoing United Front coalition — are little more than a collection of "slogans" and a "grand fudge," they say.

The right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), expected to emerge as the largest party after February-March polls, released its programme earlier this week.

The document reiterated its traditional stance on major policy issues, saying it would put "India first," restrict foreign companies from entering the country, build nuclear weapons and create 100 million jobs over the next decade.

But, as in the case of its rivals, there were few details to the broad brushstrokes.

B.G. Verghese, a former editor of the Indian Express newspaper, doubts many people will read the manifestos.

"The parties just say yes to everything — how they organise things, how they raise funds to pay for policies, these are the questions that are not answered."

"Prices, corruption, housing, water supply, education and health — these are the issues that worry the man in the village."

"But it's one thing to say you are concerned, but that does not add up to a policy."

Around half of India's 960 million population cannot read or write, while a third live in poverty and do not have access to safe drinking water.

Mr. Verghese says "bread and butter" issues would be addressed "ad hoc at the local level", adding: "Parties don't tell the country what they plan to do — nor do they have the foggiest notion them-



Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul wave to supporters during an election campaign rally for the Congress Party in the eastern Indian city of Calcutta (Reuters photo)

selves."

Vague statements abound in the manifestos.

Part of the BJP educational programme is to "restore to teachers self-esteem." No details are given. Its employment policies include "a strong commitment to make labour, both organised and unorganised, an equal and proud partner in the nation's progress."

It promises to revitalise agriculture. "Our government shall appeal to Indian kisans (farmers) to double food production by the year 2010."

The Congress, meanwhile, the BJP's main rival, "will overhaul the law and order machinery to make it more effective yet humane: more power-

ful yet more sensitive." And "all controls that breed corruption will be weeded out." Again, no details.

Zoya Hassan, a New Delhi-based professor of political science, says the manifestos are "basically fudging — it's a grand fudge."

"Unemployment is central but no parties seem to focus on it — it's never faced frontally. It's part of our culture."

There are isolated figures. The United Front, a multi-party coalition, says it will spend six per cent of gross domestic product on education. Its other figures, however, relate to its past record, not its future intentions.

Its prime objectives, it boasts, are "good governance and all-round socio-economic development: food grain in every home; every Indian healthy and literate; every child in school."

Pran Chopra, of the independent Centre of Policy Research, says costing of policies "does not happen yet." Most manifestos are "slogans or labels."

Madhu Kishwar, a feminist and magazine editor, adds: "I don't think this election has any one real agenda. All the parties make the appropriate noises on most issues."

"They promise you the moon in their manifestos ... It's all mantra chanting and blah, blah, blah."

## Group warns of military role in Cambodian logging

PHNOM PENH (R) — Disputes between Cambodia's rival military forces over logging areas are harming the prospect of peace in the country and could undermine planned elections this year, a British environmental group said Friday.

Simon Taylor of the Global Witness Group said logging was exacerbating tensions between factions of soldiers vying to control Cambodia's dwindling forests, including those in national parks.

"The military is operating all over the place," Mr. Taylor told a news conference.

"It is really out of control... These groups are getting more and more financially independent. The two prime ministers, in their own interests, need to do something about controlling these groups," he said.

Forces loyal to ousted co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh have been fighting government troops since co-Premier Hun Sen deposed the prince last July.

Former and current members of the Khmer Rouge guerrilla movement have also been involved in the fighting.

A senior official at the defence ministry denied any military involvement in logging.

"I do not think military forces are involved in logging because they are too busy with fighting," said the official who declined to be identified.

Mr. Taylor released a statement from one former Khmer Rouge division that stated they had resumed fighting the government after a truce because of a dispute over \$30 million worth of logs they claimed government troops had taken from them.

"It's quite an illustration of the role of timber in buying military support or not," Mr. Taylor said.

He said such military activity could complicate efforts to hold a free and fair election on July 26 by restricting the ability of villagers to travel or vote.

Global witness was also concerned about military logging in national parks, a problem environmental officials in the government have acknowledged. About 70 per cent of the Bokor National Park has been logged, Mr. Taylor said.

Environmental groups, including Global Witness, have predicted Cambodia's forests will be logged out in three to five years unless policies are changed.

Last year the International Monetary Fund suspended a budgetary support programme to Cambodia partly because of wasteful logging practices.

## N. Korean diplomatic defector says children dying in Pyongyang

SEOUL (AFP) — A North Korean diplomat who defected to the South said on arrival here Friday that the bodies of children who died of hunger could be seen on the streets of the capital of Pyongyang.

The diplomat, Kim Dong-Su, the North's third secretary to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome, said the harrowing scenes of hunger had been described to him by his own ambassador.

"My comrade ambassador told me that he saw dead bodies of children lying outside the railway station while he was on his way to work in Pyongyang," during a home visit in December, Mr. Kim said.

"The food situation in North Korea is at its worst," he said in a reply to a reporter's question on his reason for seeking political asylum.

The 38-year-old Kim waved to reporters as he came out of the airport with his wife and eight-year-old son. He has a 13-year-old daughter and mother in famine-stricken North Korea.

"I'm so happy to be here," he said smiling.

Mr. Kim, who had served as a North Korean diplomat in Europe for about 10 years, said that last year's defections by Hwang Jang-Yop, the most senior North Korean defector, and ambassador to Cairo Jang Sung-Gil, had encouraged him to follow suit. Earlier

reports have said children were seen roaming the streets of North Korea in search of food, and many of them had frozen to death during the winter.

Pyongyang too admitted last year that more than 100 children had died of hunger nationwide, but until now most reports have said residents of the capital city were better off.

International relief agencies have said that North Korea is in dire condition, unable to feed itself after more than two years of weather-related crop disasters, including flooding and drought.

Unconfirmed reports put the death toll from starvation between January and the end of July this year in excess of one million.

South Korean government officials here said they hoped Mr. Kim would shed some light on the economic crisis in North Korea.

South Korea has said it would contribute to the latest U.N. appeal for \$378.2 million in food aid, but the amount would be decided after its new government takes office on Feb. 25.

The U.S. Thursday said it would grant \$75 million in food aid to "North Korean civilians that are most vulnerable" in particular children.

Mr. Kim drove into the South Korean embassy in Rome with his wife and son to seek political asylum Wednesday after having informed South Korean

officials in Rome in advance.

The diplomat's defection came one day before officials from South and North Korea, the United States and China were set to meet in New York to discuss Pyongyang's request to delay an ad hoc meeting scheduled to begin in Beijing ahead of the second round of full-fledged Korean peace talks in Geneva.

Pyongyang had asked that the meeting be delayed to March, after President-elect Kim Dae-Jung takes office, and that it be held in Geneva.

An earlier Rome report said the defector had carried files with him, but government officials here denied the report.

Mr. Kim started his career as a diplomat in 1979 when he was sent to Tanzania for training. He served in Switzerland and Norway before being sent to Rome in 1994.

His defection is the fourth known case involving North Korean diplomats.

Last year, North Korea's ambassador to Cairo, Jang Sung-Gil, and his brother, Jang Sung-Ho, a trade official in Paris, defected to the United States.

In 1996, Hyon Song-II at the North Korean embassy in Zambia sought asylum with his wife, and in 1991, Koh Young-Hwan at the North Korean embassy in Congo defected to Seoul.

## Cambodian opposition party loses court appeal over name dispute

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A Cambodian court Friday rejected an appeal from a wing of an opposition political party affiliated with deposed co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh that lost the legal right to use its name and logo.

The Phnom Penh Court of Appeals ruled that a lower court had been correct last year when it awarded the use of the name Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party (BLDP) and its elephant head logo to a faction of the party allied with strongman Hun Sen.

While the losing side vowed to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court within the next 60 days, it has the effect of eliminating the BLDP name from the list of parties that will contest July's scheduled election.

Parties which contested the historic U.N.-brokered election in 1993 have only

two more weeks to register for the upcoming polls, which is not enough time for the appeal to be heard.

"Now, none of us can use the logo in the future," said Thach Reng, an MP from the losing faction which is led by the party's octogenarian founder Son Sann.

"It means the winner cannot register in time and neither can the loser."

However, foreseeing this problem, Minister of Information Leng Mouly, who leads the Hun Sen-affiliated branch of the party, has already registered his wing for the election under a different name — the Buddhist Liberal Party.

The appeals court let stand the lower court's decision that ruled that Leng Mouly had not violated the BLDP's internal regulations when he split from Son Sann in 1995 and claimed the presidency of

the party at an extraordinary congress.

Son Sann then held his own congress — at which more than a dozen people were injured by unidentified attackers throwing grenades — and expelled Leng Mouly.

The dispute festered unresolved for years with five of the party's 10 MPs supporting Son Sann and five supporting Leng Mouly.

Last February, the split worsened when Son Sann's group signed a political alliance with the royalist FUNCINPEC party led by Prince Ranariddh and Leng Mouly's side signed an alliance with Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party.

In July, when fierce fighting in the capital ousted the prince and left Hun Sen in control, many in Son Sann's wing, including four of the five MPs, fled the country fearing persecution.

## New drug may be effective against drug-resistant HIV strains

CHICAGO (AFP) — The British pharmaceutical giant Glaxo Wellcome has announced here that its drug Abacavir appears to be effective against HIV strains resistant to other anti-AIDS drugs.

The company told a conference on infectious diseases here that some HIV strains which had resisted to drugs such as AZT, 3TC, ddI, or ddC appeared to be responding to Abacavir, a nucleoside analogue reverse transcriptase inhibitor still in the development phase.

It said early clinical trials indicate that Abacavir has antiviral potency often associated with protease inhibitors, and is effective in combinations with other nucleoside analogues, protease inhibitors and non-nucleosides.

"There is still a lot of work that needs to be done to validate the relevance of resistance to clinical out-

comes for all antiretrovirals," said Randall Lanier, a virologist at Glaxo Wellcome Inc.

"However, this data indicates that Abacavir may be clinically useful in many patients who have received prior therapies and may harbour virus that is resistant to nucleoside analogues," he added.

Results of clinical trials involving more than 3,000 patients have shown that Abacavir is generally well tolerated. The most commonly reported adverse effects include headache, nausea, vomiting, malaise and rash.

Anti-HIV drugs can generally be categorised in three groups — nucleoside analogues, non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors and protease inhibitors — that attack the virus on different fronts.

Current therapies increasingly use a combination of four or more drugs.

## Torrential rains leave 1,500 homeless in southwest Rwanda

KIGALI (AFP) — Torrential rains have destroyed scores of homes in southwest Rwanda, forcing 1,500 people to flee, official Radio Rwanda reported late Thursday.

The rains overnight Tuesday destroyed at least 60 houses in the town of Nyamagabe, in Gikongoro province.

Radio Rwanda said the rains had also damaged crops.

Last year southern Rwanda, Gikongoro prefecture in particular, was hit by drought, and previous harvests in the area were mediocre.

## 34 children drown in new Indian bus tragedy

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Thirty-four children were drowned when a trailer pulled by a tractor fell into a river after colliding with a truck in central India, state-run television said Friday.

It said the overnight accident occurred in Madhya Pradesh state when the children were returning

home from a day's outing. There were reportedly two survivors.

Police said they wanted to interview the driver of the truck, who had left the scene of the accident.

Accidents are common on Indian roads, with around 70,000 people killed in road accidents every year.

The latest tragedy was the third major incident involving schoolchildren since November.

Around 60 schoolchildren died last month when a packed bus plunged into a river in dense fog in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal.

In November, 30 children

were killed when their schoolbus, packed with 120 passengers — double the legal limit — plunged off a bridge into New Delhi's main river.

Open trailers are often used in remote India as transport due to poor roads and lack of public transport.



French navy acts in Antarctic fishing war  
Sydney (AFP) — France's navy has seized a Portuguese vessel caught fishing illegally in French sub-Antarctic territory for the valuable Patagonian toothfish, an Australian environmental group said Friday.  
The patrol boat Albatros detained the Portuguese Praia do Restelo on Jan. 13, according to ISOLFICH, the International Southern Oceans Longline Fisheries Information Clearing House.  
The group, based in the island state of Tasmania, said the captain of the vessel was taken to Reunion Island, where a court handed down a \$10 million fine (\$8.2 million) fine.  
"This action taken by the French government reveals the problem of illegal fishing in the southern Ocean which has depleted stocks there," ISOLFICH said in a statement.  
The French action is the latest shot in a battle against the plunder of toothfish, which fetches up to \$7,000 a tonne, making it one of the world's most valuable fish.  
Early last year France apprehended three boats around its Kerguelen and Glén Crozet islands, apparently serving to move the fleet onto Australia's Heard and McDonald islands.  
The Australian Navy detained two Argentine-based fishing boats last October as they long-lined for toothfish in Australia's exclusive economic zone in the vast and forbidding Southern Ocean.  
New Zealand is concerned that the 100-strong illegal fleet will move east towards its sub-Antarctic islands.  
ISOLFICH said a dramatic decline in the toothfish population had affected legal fishermen in the area whose takes were regulated by the 23-nation Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources.  
"Given the extent of the illegal fishing, it is likely that the stocks of toothfish will reach commercial extinction within three years," it also said. The illegal fishing was affecting the marine bird life in the area, and was responsible for 90 per cent of the estimated 100,000 sea bird deaths annually.  
"At least three species are now on the way to extinction unless rapid action is taken," the group said. Toothfish, which can grow up to 2.1 metres long, only became a commercial catch in the last couple of years after the stock of fish was revealed in declassified U.S. satellite photos originally taken to help submarines hide in the cold waters. Authorities believe the annual illegal catch totals about 60,000 tonnes, forcing prices down to about \$4,000 a tonne.  
The fleet has threatened zones around sub-Antarctic islands belonging to Australia, France, New Zealand and South Africa and prior and all four are co-operating on intelligence exchanges.

Torrential rains leave 1,500 homeless in Rwanda  
Kigali (AFP) — Torrential rain in Rwanda left 1,500 people homeless in the capital Kigali, officials said Friday.  
The rain, which started on Thursday evening, caused landslides and flooding in some areas, forcing thousands of people to evacuate their homes.  
The Rwandan government said it was providing shelter and food for the displaced people.

## French navy acts in Antarctic fishing war

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Whitewater independent counsel Kenneth Starr answers questions for the media outside the federal courthouse in Little Rock. Starr said he cannot offer former White House intern Monica Lewinsky immunity from prosecution unless she agrees to a face-to-face meeting with his investigators (Reuters photo)

## Rescuers retrieve 11 bodies from Philippine air crash site

MANIBAY, Philippines (AFP) — Helicopters Friday brought down the first body bags from a jetliner that crashed four days ago, killing all 104 people aboard.  
One of the olive green bags was brought to this village at the foot of Mount Sumagaya along with a sack filled with scraps of documents recovered from the crash site of Cebu Pacific Air Flight 387 just below the summit.  
A priest sprinkled holy water on the body bag containing limbs and pieces of human flesh blown apart when the DC-9 jet plunged into the mountain four days ago.  
Major Ding Bautista said that six to eight body bags were flown out by helicopter after clouds at the summit cleared allowing for the temporary airlifting of some of the remains of the 99 passengers and five crew of flight 387.  
Pressure on the military to speed up the operation is mounting from grieving relatives, who have been kept waiting for days. We were told "just get something even one piece," from the wreckage, Maj. Bautista said.  
All the body bags will be flown to a makeshift morgue in Cagayan de Oro about 40 kilometres south of here, where a forensic team is standing by to begin identifying the victims.  
Many relatives are already waiting in Cagayan de Oro to retrieve the remains of their loved ones for burial. Forensic experts, however, warn it could take up to six months to identify the remains.  
No intact bodies have been found at the site so far and rescue workers returning from the mountain have told grisly tales of carnage.  
Three civilian searchers who came down the mountain early Friday recounted seeing identifiable human body parts — including arms and legs — hanging from branches, and scattered on the ground, some swathed in scraps of bloodied clothing.  
They saw a wheel from the stricken DC-9 atop a tree and what appeared to be the shattered cockpit canopy of the passenger jet.  
Recovery teams managed to recover 11 bodies, including a decapitated female corpse and six bags of body parts before night fell Thursday.  
The ill-fated flight left Manila at 9:30 a.m. (01:30 GMT) Monday bound for Cagayan de Oro City via the central island of Leyte, with its last contact at 10:48 a.m., 12 minutes before it was scheduled to land.  
Search teams have yet to find the flight data and cockpit voice recorders which may hold the key to determining the cause of crash.

## Heavy-weight Sergeant Major Kandula upstages Charles in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (AFP) — Weeks of drilling and plenty of spit and polish are essential ingredients for any successful military parade, but in Sri Lanka a bunch of bananas and a fire hose also come in handy.  
Britain's Prince Charles may have been guest of honour at Friday's colourful departure ceremony but Sergeant-Major Kandula of the Ceylon Light Infantry stole the show for many.  
Kandula is a four-year-old elephant, a regimental mascot with the rank (and pay) of a sergeant-major and a fondness for bananas, which the prince was happy to indulge.  
A bunch of bananas was brought on a silver platter and Prince Charles, in almost his last official act in Sri Lanka, fed them to Kandula. He responded with two loud trumpeting before resuming his place in the ranks.  
Kandula's term of service with the regiment, which provided Friday's airport guard of honour, is limited.  
He joined at the age of one but when he grows too big he will go to a zoo, said Captain Mahidu Perera.  
In the meantime life is good despite all the drilling. Kandula gets a sergeant-major's pay, which covers his food, and five soldiers to look after him. "He is a sergeant-major and should have some money," said Cap. Perera.  
Sri Lanka's military is engaged in bloody battles with Tamil separatists in the north. But it proved during independence golden jubilee celebrations this week that, like its former colonial power Britain, it can still stage a faultless parade — even if, like Britain, its choice of mascots may seem a shade eccentric.  
After an immaculate parade under the scorching sun Kandula marched off like the rest of the honour guard and the band. Unlike them, he immediately shed his uniform and enjoyed a cooling wash down with a fire hose.

## Heavy fighting near Freetown makes thousands flee

FREETOWN (AFP) — Pro-junta fighters near the Sierra Leonean capital were battling troops of a Nigerian-led intervention force near here Friday, prompting thousands of civilians to flee the area, a junta spokesman said.  
No details were available of casualties in the clashes at Jui, 21 kilometres east of the capital, which initially pitted Nigerian ECOMOG troops based there against former rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), now allied with the army regime which seized power here last May, residents told AFP.  
After a short burst of hostilities early Thursday, fighting involving mortar shells resumed that evening and continued into mid-morning Friday, by which time regular Sierra Leonean soldiers were also involved.  
Alpha jets, used by ECOMOG to drop bombs around Freetown several times since the coup and based in neighbouring Liberia, flew over the capital Friday morning, prompting Sierra Leonean troops on the ground to fire at them.  
The ECOMOG troops intervened in Sierra Leone days after a coup on May 25 last year which brought current Lieutenant-General Johnny Paul Koroma to power. Acting in the name of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), they have enforced tough sanctions against the regime, which has pledged to return power to elected civilians next April.  
The reason for the current fighting remains unclear, but drivers passing through one of three checkpoints near Jui Thursday told an independent radio station they overheard members of the People's Army (formerly the RUF) complaining of unspecified Nigerian provocation.  
Junta defence spokesman Lieutenant Colonel John Milton told AFP by telephone: "We intercepted a secret message being given to all Nigerian commanders in ECOMOG" for an all-out attack of Freetown.  
"All Sierra Leone troops were then put on alert so we were able to stop them carrying out their assignment. The Nigerians at the international airport at Lungi (across the Sierra Leone estuary) were firing heavy mortars passing through Jui had been closed, stranding many vehicles.

## Lewinsky told colleague she would lie under oath — report

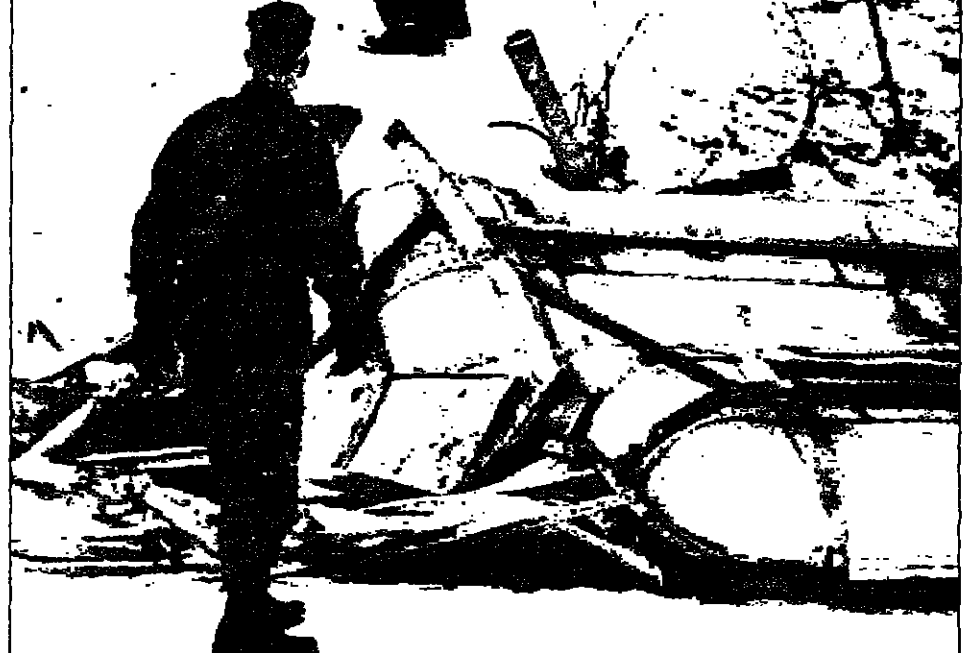
WASHINGTON (AFP) — An ex-colleague of Monica Lewinsky testified the former White House intern told her she had an affair with President Bill Clinton and would lie about it under oath.  
The Washington Post reported Friday.  
Ms. Lewinsky "said that she was going to deny everything" about the alleged liaison in testimony in a sexual harassment lawsuit against Mr. Clinton, the daily cited Linda Tripp's sworn statement as saying.  
Ms. Tripp's statement in the Post also said that "Clinton would deny everything and she repeatedly stated that I must lie and deny she had ever told me" about the affair, which Ms. Tripp said Ms. Lewinsky claimed began Nov. 15, 1995.  
Ms. Tripp earned worldwide notoriety after it was reported that she secretly recorded conversations with Ms. Lewinsky in which the trusting 24-year-old told her she had an affair with Mr. Clinton.  
The scandal-prone president has been in the hot seat since the allegations surfaced Jan. 21 that he had an affair with Ms. Lewinsky when she was a 21-year-old intern then urged her to lie about it. The latter charge is an impeachable offence.  
The Post provided the text of the statement on which it based its report, which the paper said was a sworn statement Ms. Tripp signed Jan. 21 for lawyers for Paula Jones, who is suing Mr. Clinton for sexual harassment.  
In the statement, Ms. Tripp said Ms. Lewinsky told her of the affair "on innumerable occasions," showed Ms. Tripp gifts the two exchanged and played audiotapes with Mr. Clinton's voice.  
Arrayed against Mr. Clinton, who in effect is fighting for his job and his place in history, is independent counsel Kenneth Starr, who has been investigating alleged wrongdoing by the Clintons for nearly four years.  
Thursday, the two adversaries fired verbal salvos in the case in separate public appearances.  
Mr. Clinton, at a photo session with visiting British Prime Minister Tony Blair, made his first public comments on the matter in a week, telling reporters: "I've said the charges aren't true."  
"There's an investigation going on. And while that's going on it's my duty to keep doing the job I was hired to do by the American people, and that's my position," the president said.  
Mr. Clinton denied the charges in a sworn statement concerning the 1994 lawsuit by Mrs. Jones, who has accused Mr. Clinton of propositioning her when he was Arkansas governor in 1991 and she a state employee.  
The president has also denied that charge and Mrs. Jones' lawyers are attempting to establish a pattern of his sexual misconduct.  
In Arkansas, Mr. Starr would not comment on a possible deal of immunity from prosecution for Ms. Lewinsky but told reporters that his probe is "moving very quickly and we have made very significant progress."  
"We are going by the book, we want the truth, we want all the truth... and we will satisfy ourselves that we are getting the truth," he said.  
Mr. Starr's office issued a statement late Thursday saying he sought a "face-to-face interview" with Ms. Lewinsky — who denied the affair in a sworn statement in the Jones case — before any immunity deal goes through.  
Conflicting media accounts and no official statement make it difficult to determine at where immunity talks between Mr. Starr and Ms. Lewinsky lawyer William Ginsburg stand.  
Meanwhile, deputy White House Chief of Staff John Podesta said Thursday he told the grand jury gathering evidence in the case nothing that gainsaid Mr. Clinton's testimony or public denials.  
"Nothing in my testimony in any way contradicted the strong denial the president has made," said Mr. Podesta, adding that the grand jury has called him to testify again.  
Mr. Podesta was the second person to testify after Justin Coleman, also a former White House intern, went before the grand jury.  
The 21-year-old Coleman — who worked at the White House well after Ms. Lewinsky left — told reporters as he left the court that he knew nothing of the alleged affair.  
Also on the list is Mr. Clinton's close friend Vernon Jordan. Mr. Starr is looking into allegations Mr. Jordan coached Ms. Lewinsky on giving a false deposition and got her a job in New York as a payoff for her silence.

## Hong Kong poultry farms fail hygiene tests

HONG KONG (AFP) — Most Hong Kong poultry farms were reported Friday to be too dirty to house the first batches of chickens due from China after a month-long ban aimed at containing a deadly flu virus that claimed six lives.  
Agriculture and Fisheries Department officials said most of the territory's 200 poultry farms and "poultry hotels" used to keep imported chickens before they are sold had failed to pass hygiene tests.  
"They will have to pass the test before a licence can be given for them to keep chickens," one official said.  
Some poultry retail outlets had not been checked with just hours to go before the resumption of chicken imports from China, because the owners could not be found, officials said.  
The first consignment of imported Chinese chickens is expected early Saturday and final preparations were being made Friday to minimise the risk of infection of the H5N1 virus at public markets.  
The chickens were expected to be available for sale Sunday.  
Agriculture and Fisheries Director Leslie Wei, who visited poultry suppliers across the Chinese border Friday, assured Hong Kong consumers that mainland chickens were "absolutely safe" and Hong Kong people could be "entirely at ease," Hong Kong government radio said.  
Under tough new measures, brought in since the Dec. 23 ban on imports from China, all chickens from the mainland must undergo a five-day quarantine and obtain a clean bill of health on both sides of the border.  
Blood samples will be taken from each lorry load to test for the virus.  
The first new consignment of chickens from China — some 38,000 birds — accounts for only 40 per cent of the previous supply.  
Despite assurances by wholesalers that chicken prices would not increase because of the limited numbers, press reports said Friday retailers were already planning to put up prices by as much as 20 per cent.  
And there were mixed feelings in the territory as chickens were about to reappear on the dinner table.  
"I think I will go back to eating chickens again," one housewife told a Hong Kong television network.  
But another said: "I don't think I will eat chicken right away. I still have little confidence."

## U.S. pilot blames technical failure for cable car disaster

ROME (AFP) — The pilot of the U.S. aircraft which sliced through the wires of a cable car in Italy sending 20 people plunging to their deaths, has blamed technical malfunctions for the disaster, a report said Friday.  
"I had no precise reading of my altitude," Captain Richard Ashby, 30, was quoted as saying by the Corriere della Sera daily.  
"The altimeter, for some unknown reason, was not working properly and the radar was also malfunctioning," Cap. Ashby said.  
Witnesses to Tuesday's accident said Cap. Ashby's twin-engine Grumman EA-6B fighter flew low down the valley in the Italian Dolomites and swooped under the wires supporting the cable car which it clipped and sliced in two.  
The cable car plunged 100 metres onto a snow-covered mountainside, killing 19 skiers and one cabin attendant.  
The newspaper did not indicate how it had obtained Cap. Ashby's statement.  
The pilot said the wires of the cable car suddenly appeared in front of his eyes as he was carrying out the low-level flying exercise.  
"I did everything I could to avoid them. I veered to the left, but touched them with the right wing and then again with the tail fin," Cap. Ashby said.  
"I had thought I was at the regulation altitude of 160 metres," he said, adding that while the plane had strayed from its flight path earlier, it was on course when the accident occurred.  
Cap. Ashby, who confirmed that he had been on his maiden flight in the region at the time, said that at first he was convinced he had hit a high-tension power line and only discovered what had really happened after landing.  
The disaster has created differences between Rome and Washington over who should be responsible for the inquiry and over the circumstances of the accident.  
A six-member U.S. military team of investigators, led by a U.S. Marines general, arrived in Italy Thursday.



U.S. Air Force military officials and Italian Carabinieri inspect the site of the Cavalese cable car disaster caused by a low-flying U.S. warplane. The U.S. Air Force is sending a special team from the Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point in North Carolina to investigate how one of its warplanes hit overhead wires and caused the death of 20 holidaymakers (Reuters photo)

## Balloonists break record for longest unrefuelled flight

GENEVA (AFP) — A European ballooning trio Friday beat the world record for the longest non-stop unrefuelled flight, staying airborne for longer than nine days, three minutes and 44 seconds, their press centre in Geneva said.  
The Breitling Orbiter 2, which earlier this week gave up hopes of circling the world, broke the record that had been held since December 1986 by U.S. aviator Dick Rutan and his Voyager aeroplane.  
It broke the record at 1109 GMT while drifting over the Bay of Bengal, heading to Myanmar (Burma) where the crew planned to complete their flight which began Jan. 28 at Chateau-d'Oex, Switzerland, said spokesman Gerard Semier.  
He said the towering silver balloon — with a bright orange gondola dangling beneath — would probably come down in plains Saturday near the ancient town of Bago, 80 kilometres from Myanmar's capital Yangon (Rangoon).  
The record-breaking provided some consolation to Swiss pilot Bertrand Piccard and his colleagues, Belgian Wim Verstraeten and Briton Andy Elson, who had high hopes when they first set off.  
They had wanted to be the first to go around the world non-stop in a balloon, but a refusal by China to let them ride a fast jet stream through its airspace forced them to give up that goal. China later changed its mind, albeit too late for the balloonists.



## Jordan Times

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## What bargain is about

AMID CONFLICTING reports about the status of the ongoing diplomatic efforts to defuse the standoff between Iraq and the U.N. over providing free access to all sites for UNSCOM weapons inspection teams there is a growing consensus against the precipitous resort to military means. His Majesty King Hussein in the telephone conversation he had with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak last week reaffirmed Jordan's preference for a political solution to the crisis. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, echoed an identical sentiment during a recent interview with the London-based Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Jordan Television in which he also made clear that the Kingdom would not allow, within its means, the use of its territory or airspace as launching pads against Iraq.

Practically all Arab capitals have publicly opposed the military option, urging instead that diplomatic efforts run their course. Riyadh has added its critical voice to the Arab chorus seeking a peaceful resolution for the crisis and has refused the use of its territory as a base for attacking Iraqi targets. Even Kuwait, the staunchest supporter of the U.S. militant posture, has cushioned its backing by making it conditional on the exhaustion of all non-military means. Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid, who is visiting Baghdad armed with an Arab consensus against the use of force, has been trying to persuade the Iraqis to heed the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions in a bid to frustrate all military designs on that country.

In return, the Iraqi regime needs to be sensitive to the overwhelming Arab concerns and accommodating to the efforts being exerted to ward off a confrontation from which not only Iraq but several of its Arab neighbours could suffer. For the sake of its people above all, President Saddam has to handle the situation carefully and wisely.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has put forward a new proposal to that aims at immediately increasing Iraq's oil-for-food deal to \$5 billion every six months. In addition, he is offering to use his good offices to end the crippling sanctions once Iraq fulfills all its obligations under the Security Council resolutions. As long as the regime puts the interests of its own people and country ahead of all other considerations, there could be no excuse to prolong the crisis. After all, this may be exactly what the Americans are betting on or actually bargaining for.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab al Yawm's Taher Adwan said Iraq is rightly demanding that the U.N. sanctions be lifted after the inspectors have completed their work. Iraq would be willing to allow the inspectors to search the presidential palaces and other sensitive sites provided the world community promise that it would lift the sanctions altogether once no weapons of mass destruction have been found in these sites, said the writer. America's dropping of rockets on Iraq can by no means finish the job of the inspectors started seven years ago, but rather would cause destruction and the death of innocent people, said the writer. The sanctions must end because after all these years they have failed to topple the regime in Baghdad as the U.S. had wished, and only succeeded in exacerbating the sufferings and the ordeal of the innocent Iraqi people, stressed the writer. He said that if a new aggression is launched on Iraq, not only that country will suffer but so will all of Iraq's neighbours, particularly at the economic level, with Jordan probably bearing the brunt.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi said the general situation prevailing in the Arab World prior to 1996 was not as bad as it is now, and yet the Arab leaders met at a summit in Cairo and passed resolutions which helped their countries to adopt unified policies in their own national interests. It is true that the June 1996 summit did not deter the Israeli government from pursuing its practices nor did it end the sufferings of the Iraqi people, but it has nonetheless contributed to tightening pressure on the Israeli government, exposing its actions before the world and contributed to stemming any tendency on the part of the Arab states to normalise relations with the Jewish state, according to the writer. He said that while the 1996 summit paved the way for improving Arab-Iranian relations, it failed in preventing the formation of the Israeli-Turkish alliance. On the whole the summit has had its beneficial effect on the general Arab situation, said the writer who added that there is an urgent need to reconvene such a summit in order to deal with the new developments and the new challenges posed to the nation.

## Jordanian Perspective

## Tensions build in occupied lands too

THE RECENT Middle East swing of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright should have reaffirmed the Arab message that Washington cannot compel the Arab World to fall in line with the U.S. drive to punish Iraq for its refusal to allow its sovereignty and territorial integrity to be violated while keeping a blind eye to Israel's blatant violation of Arab rights.

Albright's talks with Arab leaders this time around produced a uniform agreement that Iraq should abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions and cooperate with U.N. weapon inspectors, but the U.S. secretary of state found little backing for Washington's determination to launch military action against Iraq. In every Arab country she visited, Albright was told implicitly or explicitly that the U.S. should look at the Israeli refusal to abide by relevant Security Council resolutions with the same seriousness as it does Iraq's compliance with the world body's decisions.

We don't really know what precisely was Albright's response to the pointed Arab reminder of the imbalance in the American position. But we do know that Israel

thumbed its nose at the U.S. with another open challenge to the very concept of land-for-peace as the basis for stability and security in the region: In less than 48 hours after Albright left the region, it was revealed that the Israeli government had given permission for Jewish settlements in the Ras Al Amoud area of Arab East Jerusalem. Was it a coincidence or an emphatic message to Washington?

It is an understatement that tension is building in the occupied territories as a result of the Israeli moves. On several occasions in the last few weeks, Palestinian police took battle positions with their guns pointed at Israeli soldiers, and clashes took place between Palestinian protesters and Israeli security forces in the Bethlehem area. They are ominous signs of the danger that lurks behind the diplomacy and consistent Palestinian efforts to contain the situation while hoping against hope that at some point Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would see that his hard-line policy cannot but take the region to another disaster.

The main theme that Albright harped on during her visit was the "threat" that Saddam Hussein poses to the region.

But we find Netanyahu a bigger threat to the region's security and stability. What we fail to see is an American realisation of this truth.

Thrown into the bargain is the massive propaganda buildup in Israel against the perceived threat of an Iraqi missile attack with biological weapons. Suggestions that Iraq has biological warheads ready for missile delivery were the best weapon that was delivered to Netanyahu, who has skillfully used them to further his country's self-assumed image as a target of continued Arab military threat and argued against any "territorial compromise" with the Palestinians. But the real message seems to have been completely ignored: Regardless of whether or not Iraq poses a real threat, Israel cannot hope to have stability and security through military might. The present crisis may pass without disasters, but will Israel learn from it that real security and stability will have to be based on recognition of and respect for Arab and Palestinian rights, in the West Bank including Arab East Jerusalem and other Palestinian territories, the Golan Heights and South Lebanon?

## Iraq: Don't do it yet

By Gwynne Dyer

"THE RATINGS are so good, Clinton's already planning the next scandal," said the TV comedian, referring to the highest-ever public approval ratings for the U.S. president only a week after the story broke about his alleged sexual liaison with young White House staffer Monica Lewinsky. For the moment, at least, the American public has chosen to believe Clinton's denials.

And that explains why U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in the Middle East to round up support for a U.S. strike against Iraq, can now confidently predict: "It's not days away, and it's not months, so that leaves weeks."

Many American commentators (and most foreign ones) spent the past week predicting that Clinton would bomb Iraq to distract Americans from the scandal engulfing the White House. But that was nonsense: Clinton is clever enough to know that it wouldn't work.

Americans are not stupid, and even the insular and nationalistic Washington press corps would have joined up the dots for the American public if they suspected that that was Clinton's game. So long as Clinton was seen as a beleaguered president on the brink of impeachment, his trouser problem actually protected Saddam Hussein. Both American and world opinion would condemn a U.S. strike against Iraq as merely the diversionary tactic of a desperate man.

But now Clinton has demonstrated his continuing support in American public opinion — approval ratings of 67-72 per-

cent in weekend polls — and that changes everything. The polls have set Clinton free to act against Iraq, and the action is imminent.

Russia, France and Turkey are all sending special diplomatic missions to Baghdad this week to try to talk Saddam Hussein down from his high horse. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has just offered to double the amount of oil Iraq is allowed to sell every six months to pay for humanitarian imports (to \$5.2 billion), in order to give Saddam a face-saving retreat. They are all quite frightened of what will happen if he doesn't back down.

This time it won't be a few cruise missiles one afternoon and then back to diplomacy. The target this time is the weapons of mass destruction (chemical and biological warheads mounted on modified Scud missiles) that Saddam has allegedly buried away in sites he has declared "presidential palaces" and closed off to U.N. arms inspectors. Getting them would not be easy.

In 1995, senior officials from the Pentagon, the State Department and the intelligence agencies took part in a three-week war-game at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island that was based on a new shoot-out with Iraq. It quickly got out of control, with Iraq using biological weapons in the Gulf and in terrorist attacks on U.S. cities. In the end, the U.S. used nuclear weapons on Iraq.

War-games are not total fantasies. The people playing them are those who would make the real decisions, and they were

appalled by the outcome. But when U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defence Kenneth Bacon was asked last week whether the United States would reply to an Iraqi use of biological weapons with 'nuclear penetrating bombs' on the Iraqi weapons sites, he said: "I don't think we've ruled anything in or out in this regard. Our position is that we would respond very aggressively."

These are not the traditional air-bursts that devastate entire cities, but buried and largely "contained" nuclear explosions. Moreover, Bacon was talking about retaliation for an Iraqi first use of germ weapons. Nevertheless, even conventional U.S. strikes could cause "spillage" of Saddam Hussein's poison gas, anthrax, etc. killing thousands of Iraqis — and Bacon was actually talking about the first combat use of nuclear weapons since 1945.

Is this wise? True, Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980 and caused the deaths of almost a million people in an 8-year war. He invaded Kuwait in 1990, and it took the biggest coalition war since 1945 to get him out. He has fired missiles at Israel, and sponsored terrorist strikes around the planet.

His troops and torturers have killed more Iraqis than all the other regimes to rule Iraq in this century, including its Turkish and British colonial rulers. Even after his defeat in the Gulf War, he continued to work on weapons of mass destruction. There are no loopholes in the arms inspection regime he was forced to sign in 1991, no exemptions for "presidential sites," but he began to defy the U.N. as soon as he

detected divisions in the Security Council.

Saddam Hussein deserves to be punished — but is the price too high? It could be.

The worry is not so much that strikes on Iraq would kill off the Israeli-Palestinian "peace process." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has already done that quite effectively. Nor is the risk of driving Arab regimes into Saddam Hussein's arms any greater than last time; the "Arab street" has an emotional loyalty to any Arab country against any foreigners, but the governments of Saddam Hussein's neighbours have no illusions about him in private.

The risk is simply that air strikes cannot force Saddam into submission unless they are escalated to terrifying levels of destruction, for otherwise he is at no personal risk. And since nobody is willing to commit ground troops to Iraq, the U.S. has no other strategy for finishing what the air strikes would start.

If you don't know how to finish, then don't start. Or at least, don't start yet — and there is no real urgency. Saddam Hussein has been hiding these weapons for years already without using them.

The best interim strategy is the one suggested recently by General Merrill McPeak, former U.S. Air Force chief of staff. Extend the "no-fly" zone to cover the whole of Iraq, including Baghdad: that will meet the psychological need to "do something." Keep the pressure on militarily, but don't go off half-cocked. And wait for something to turn up. Quite often, it does.

## Threat of assault on Iraq forges concerns

REVIEWED BY  
 ELIA NASRALLAH

THE LOCAL Arabic dailies last week focused on the Iraq-U.S. crisis and the ongoing U.S. threats to use military force against Baghdad, domestic affairs and developments in the Middle East.

Al Ra'i's Fakhri Kassar said the Arabs in general reject Washington's threats of aggression on Iraq which for the past seven years has endured starvation and deprivation and is no longer in a position even to defend itself. The Arab masses in general support the Iraqi people's struggle to survive and to repel aggression, but it is regrettable to see Arab regimes not coming to their aid and certain Arab regimes backing America's aggression on the Iraqi people, said the writer. It is painful to see many countries succumbing to Washington's desires in the case of Iraq which no longer possesses weapons of mass destruction and is implementing U.N. resolutions and unable to demand that the U.S. force Israel to comply with the U.N. resolutions on Palestine, he added. The writer said the new aggression is designed to force the Iraqi people to hand over their oil wealth to the American master so that it can consolidate its hold on the world.

Taher al Adwan, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm, addressed the consequences of aggression on Jordan's position saying that the disruption of Iraqi oil supplies to Jordan will be disastrous for the Kingdom. In the event of an American military strike on Iraq, oil supplies could be stopped with detrimental effects on Jordan's economy, which would have serious social, political and security consequences on the Kingdom, he added. What is needed is not only for Jordan to search for an alternative source of oil but rather to raise protests against Washington's threats and rally the Arab World towards foiling the U.S. drive to secure Arab backing for its new adventure said the writer. In addition to taking precautionary emergency measures in Jordan vis-a-vis the prospect of having oil supplies cut in the event of a new war on Iraq, and directing attention towards obtaining oil from other sources, the government ought to join a concerted Arab effort to ward off the coming danger, he demanded.

Fahed Faneek of Al Ra'i commented on a recent U.S. administration statement that the Iraqi crisis is related to America's national security. He said since Iraq has no power to threaten the U.S. itself, the only logical interpretation for such a statement is that the U.S. is interested in controlling Iraq's oil wealth. The U.S. realises too well that Iraq does not threaten its interests at all in the Gulf region where America maintains a formidable force to deter future aggression, but it also realises that Iraq possesses the world's second largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, and Washington has its eyes on that wealth, according to the writer. He said the U.S. is also fully aware that if left alone Iraq, with its great wealth can achieve parity with Israel's military power and help liberate the occupied Arab lands. To achieve its purpose, he said, the U.S. is now deceiving the world by claiming that Saddam Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction that threaten the whole world.

Al Dustour's George Haddad said the U.S. is threatening to launch aggression on Iraq as a prelude to partitioning that country and later cause a disintegration of the other Asian Arab states. The U.S. hopes to create smaller Arab states; weak states with no power to threaten

the Arab regimes try to protect these interests. He said a devastating aggression on Iraq will no doubt draw an equally devastating reaction from the Arab masses against the aggressors' interests. Humiliation of the masses, he added, cannot last forever, adding that the Arab masses realise all too well their enemies and allies in this region.

Fakhri Kassar of Al Ra'i said that in view of the shooting of pharmacists in Jordan protection is required for them one way or another. The writer said, in the past few years Amman has seen several pharmacists killed at the hands of drug addicts and criminals. Pharmacists remain exposed to danger of attack as the government cannot place guards or police officers to guard drug stores 24 hours a day, then the only solution is to allow the pharmacists to carry guns to defend themselves, he demanded.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneek said the recent Arab Song Festival organised by Orbit Satellite Television station was very beneficial to Jordan. Like the Jerash and the Fuhais festivals, the Orbit programme attracted visitors to Jordan to attend the performances from various parts of the Arab World, he noted. Apart from the financial returns, the festival succeeded in projecting Jordan as a venue for cultural events and a place where similar festivals can be organised due to the facilities available. But, he said, the shooting of singer Ragheb Alameh marred the event. In addition the behaviour of members of the audience sometimes did not reflect the actual good and hospitable character of the Jordanian society, something, said the writer, which has to be addressed before inviting other festivals to the country.

Hilmi Asmar, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm criticised the Social Security Corporation (SSC) for joining an Israeli firm in investing in a joint project. He said the Jordanian public owns the funds which the SSC is risking in this joint venture with the Israelis, and the people have the right to question such behaviour. The writer said that if the government has the power to open up the way for the Israelis to acquire shares in Jordanian industries it should not influence the SSC into joining Israeli firms in joint projects using Jordanian people's funds for that matter, he said. The writer said that if the government has a free hand to deal with the Israeli government in line with the Wadi Araba peace treaty it should by no means be allowed to disperse with the Jordanian people's funds against their will.

The Arab masses are patient, but they can about the aggressors' objectives by striking at their interests. The writer said the aggressors should know that the Arab masses will strike back and threaten America's interests in the region even if

## LETTERS

## A familiar story

To the editor:

ON READING the Jordan Times of Feb. 5, 1998, I ran across a familiar story. A brother killed his sister for suspecting a relationship with a male friend.

I know that much has been written and said condemning this subject. Frankly I feel prompted to write again about it, angrily, because this subject has gone too far, and no concrete measures have been taken to prevent those who are acting like God on earth, forbidding something for others especially female relatives, but allowing it for themselves.

Everybody should abide by religious and social standards and rules. But we, as humans, tend to make mistakes regardless of what these mistakes are. Nobody is perfect. Solving a problem by killing for whatever reasons, is outrageous and unacceptable by any standard. You who took the life of your sister are the least perfect, and this act of killing proves it.

I call upon the decision-makers in my beloved country to take a serious step concerning this matter once and for all.

Rula Samain Naffa  
 Amman

## Matter of policy

To the editor:

IT HAS been noticed recently that the Jordan Times only publishes letters to the editor sent either from abroad or from the foreign community in Jordan. I have always admired the open policy of the freedom of expression in the Jordan Times. Has this policy changed? I wonder!!

Najwa Halasa Karadsheh  
 Amman

Editor's note: The Jordan Times would like to assure Mrs. Karadsheh that its policy of publishing letters to the editor is not to favour any particular origin of such letters.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.



February 7, 1998  
Lusa Kellani

# Millennium's children heading for fame — maybe

By Michael Field  
Agence France Presse

AUCKLAND — Soon after midnight on Jan. 1, 2000 the world's first millennium child will be born somewhere in the South Pacific. Conceived in the southern autumn and born into the height of the summer, a life-time of celebrity awaits the child — provided the birth has not been too contrived.

The day's first light always falls first across Fiji, Tonga and New Zealand, and statistically the millennium's first birth will be here, two to three hours before even neighbouring Australia departs the old century.

Currently New Zealand produces six infants an hour, while Fiji delivers two and Tonga one child every three hours. New Zealand's remote Chatham Islands, 860 kilometres east of here will greet the millennium's first light, although Fiji and Tonga are threatening to go on daylight savings time to ensure they are first.

The Chatham's hospital handles four births a year and any threat of complications sees the pregnant mother put on a plane for New Zealand. Not so in Fiji's Taveuni Island which the 180 degree line actually passes over — although the International Date-line has been moved to the east. They have around 30 births a month and could easily, if somewhat obscurely, produce the first child.

But the smart money will be on Auckland's National Women's Hospital, New Zealand's busiest, which handles 25 newborns a day. "We would really like to have the first baby" of the new millennium, hospital spokeswoman Veronica Mazur told AFP, adding the busiest time for births at the hospital is between 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., although Mazur said some babies were born around midnight.

The key will be the actual time the birth is noted on the birth certificate.

"Basically the baby is considered to have been born when it is fully exposed, once you can see the feet," she said.

That is the call of the midwife or doctor. While a full-term baby, to be born on New Year's Day, requires conception in late March, National Women's has handled babies up to 25-weeks premature — suggesting an early September pregnancy for Millennium's Child is a risky possibility. Mazur said National Women's occasionally gets requests from mothers-to-be for babies to be induced on a particular day. The requests usually come from Asians looking for auspicious dates.

In Singapore some years ago the rate of induced births soared among mothers anxious to have children in the Year of the Dragon rather than the pending Year of the Snake.

Mazur said the hospital would not usually accept such requests, nor would it induce births, or resort to forceps or caesarean deliveries for outside reasons.

"We always look out for the baby's best interests," she said.

Former rugby All Black Andy Haden who now manages high profile celebrities, agrees it will be a global event, provided fate is left to handle the timing.

"If it is contrived it will miss the mark," he says. "The more contrived and the more planned the less likely it will receive the profile." He said he would tell the parents not to underestimate the international market interest in the first child, and the family "may benefit handsomely" by letting management agents handle the media interest.

"Celebrity will be thrust upon the child," Haden says. If the child is of Pacific Island heritage the family may have little hesitation over the name — some kind of variation on Millennium such as Millie, perhaps for a girl. It is common to name a child after the day or month they were born, their place in the family or some other major event around the time of the birth. The business of children born at key moments was the theme of Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* in which the key character, Saleem Sinai, was born in Bombay at the stroke of midnight, August 15, 1947, the moment India became independent from Britain.

A complex, beautiful and often sad novel, anybody considering trying for Millennium's Child might do well to read it first — and go for a March '99 misadventure.

# Attorney general says foreigners in Israel must be given gas masks

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli legal authorities ordered the government on Friday to provide gas masks to foreign residents for protection against a possible attack by Iraq with chemical or biological arms.

"The state of Israel has the responsibility to supply gas masks to the entire population residing in the country, including foreign workers," the Israeli justice ministry said in a statement.

It said the ruling was made by Israeli Attorney General Eliyahu Rubinstein and also covered some 100,000 Palestinians living in parts of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip still under full Israeli control.

Palestinians in autonomous zones are the responsibility of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority.

The justice ministry said authorities were still studying how to provide masks for the estimated 300,000 foreign workers and thousands of tourists in the country.

It said one option would require employers of foreign labourers to supply their workers with the protective equipment.

Mr. Rubinstein's ruling came amid growing complaints that foreigners were being barred from acquiring gas masks, which are routinely distributed to Israeli citizens and Palestinian residents of occupied Arab east Jerusalem, despite the possibility of an Iraqi attack.

Thousands of Israelis have flocked to army distribution centres since last week to pick up protective equipment amid fears that Iraq could fire missiles armed with chemical or bacteriological warheads at Israel in response to threatened airstrikes.

The United States and Britain have said they will launch a major assault on Iraq if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein persists in barring U.N. inspectors from sites suspected of hiding banned missiles and chemical or biological weapons.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also promised a gathering of ambassadors to Israel on Friday that foreigners would receive protection if the country was threatened by an Iraqi attack.

"We understand our responsibility not only to extend civil defence measures and means to Israeli citizens but also to the non-Israelis who are here and we are making every effort to do so," he told the envoys.

But Mr. Netanyahu also judged the likelihood President Hussein could or would strike Israel even if attacked as "very low."

Foreigners who sought to obtain gas masks this week at army distribution centres were turned away and the one domestic manufacturer of the masks said all its stocks were reserved to the army and Israel.

During the 1991 Gulf war, Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles armed with conventional warheads at Israel, killing two persons.

At that time Israel also feared Iraq could use non-conventional weapons and gas masks were distributed to Israelis and foreigners alike.

Another complaint about the availability of gas masks came Friday from Ultra-Orthodox Jews, who said there were not enough masks adapted to men with beards.

"This is a question of life or death," said Rabbi Chaim Miller, a deputy mayor of Jerusalem from the United Torah Judaism Party.

Rabbi Miller called on the government to distribute specially designed gas masks to the thousands of bearded Israelis "despite their high cost."

During the Gulf war, the supreme court ordered the government to provide gas masks for bearded men following a lawsuit filed by the Ultra-Orthodox, who by religious law are prohibited from shaving.

An army spokesman said special gas masks would be made available "if the need arises."

# Iraq to free all Arabs from its jails, including Kuwaitis

(Continued from page 1)

"I think that a certain number of ideas have made progress, of course, but we need to continue to work very seriously," Mr. Dufourcq, the secretary general of the French foreign ministry, told reporters in Damascus.

Another French diplomat, the head of the foreign ministry's Middle East and North Africa affairs, Jean-Claude Cousseran, is expected to arrive in Amman Sunday for talks with senior officials on the Iraqi situation.

Agence France Presse said.

Mr. Cousseran, who accompanied Mr. Dufourcq in his visit to Baghdad, "is coming to Amman to find out the Jordanian authorities' position and views on the crisis," a French diplomat was quoted by AFP as saying.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs Jawad Anani has urged Iraq to respect U.N. resolutions on arms inspections in order to avert a U.S. strike.

"As a small country, we can advise but we cannot prevent a military strike against Iraq," Dr. Anani was quoted by the United Arab Emirates Arabic daily, Al Itihad, as saying.

"We also cannot adopt the same stand as in 1991 because this will be a disaster for us... We call on the Iraqi government to respect its commitments and not to defy the world because the result will be a new catastrophe," Dr. Anani told Al Itihad.

"In the absence of an Arab mechanism that could influence the Iraqi or the international positions, Jordan is worried. So, we hope the Iraqi leadership will respond and end the crisis," Dr. Anani said.

Also in Amman, the Jordan chapter of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, criticised the U.S. threats to strike against Iraq and called on the world community to put an end to the American threats.

"The organisation is following with concern the U.S. threats to hit the Iraqi people and its attempts to mass more support for a possible strike," said the two-page statement of the organisation.

"The continuous sanctions against Iraqi people are agonising and contrary to international law," said the statement. "We call upon all (international institutions) and human rights organisations to criticise the (U.S.) human rights violations and exercise pressure... to end this unjustified embargo," added the statement.

calling on President Boris Yeltsin to review Russia's adherence to U.N. sanctions against Iraq in the event of an attack on it.

"We have firmly adopted a stance of saying no to the force scenario. It is impossible, it means a world war," Russian President Boris Yeltsin insisted Thursday.

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine made clear that France will not join in any U.S.-led strike on Iraq now, telling Europe 1 radio that diplomatic means to pressure Baghdad remain.

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"Both in Saudi Arabia, and in Kuwait, they were in full agreement that we can't leave Saddam in control of his arsenal of terror, we can't let him obstruct and defeat the inspections."

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The lower house, the Duma, adopted a resolution Wednesday

about Iraq's chemical and biological arsenal, including 38,000 chemical weapons, six missile launchers and 480,000 litres of five chemical agents.

At the White House, President Clinton and Mr. Blair said they doubted Iraq could be convinced to allow international inspectors unfettered access to its chemical and biological arsenal.

"All of our experience with Saddam Hussein teaches us that diplomacy has very little chance of working, unless it is clear to him that if diplomacy does not work, then the threat and the reality of force is there," Mr. Blair said.

Since March 1996, inspectors have visited 63 sites where they believed the Iraqis were hiding contraband. Inspectors were delayed from entering 38 of the sites and Italy denied access to 14 others in the name of national security. Iraq's repeated refusals have led to a steady buildup of U.S. military force in the Gulf.

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# U.S., Britain announce more marines, Tornados to Gulf

(Continued from page 1)

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# The Saturday Crossword

STICK-TO-IT-IVENESS  
By Gayle Waters Dean, Bryson City, North Carolina

- ACROSS
- 1 Mort, the comic
  - 5 Dinking out experiences
  - 10 Addressess Tilly and Ryan
  - 14 Old Irish alphabet
  - 19 On the bry
  - 20 Where van Gogh painted the mad
  - 21 Former draft classification
  - 22 One of the seven deadly sins
  - 23 Single thing
  - 24 See it through
  - 27 Brothers of Marlene
  - 29 Israel's national airline
  - 30 Cartwright or Down
  - 31 Oklenokee resident
  - 32 Jacob and Esau's father
  - 34 Supporting pieces
  - 35 See it through
  - 40 Males laugh
  - 41 Pretty twins?
  - 42 "48"
  - 43 Transport
  - 47 Solemn agreement
  - 48 Three-time Indy winner
  - 50 Neighborhood
  - 52 Completely lacking sense
  - 53 Suffix used in chemistry
  - 54 Unwarp fruit
  - 55 Asks intrusive questions
  - 56 San Francisco griddler, for short
  - 57 See it through

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000

- DOWN
- 1 Chimed in
  - 2 Regarding
  - 3 Dishonorable man
  - 4 Streetlight support
  - 5 Slander
  - 6 Heretofore
  - 7 Woe is me
  - 8 "My Name is Asher"
  - 9 Wind dir.
  - 10 Smoleons
  - 11 Tie together
  - 12 Subj. of rocks
  - 13 Paulo, Brazil
  - 14 Reveal oneself
  - 15 Maddox and Norman
  - 16 Earl "Fathe"
  - 17 Confuse
  - 18 Tablelands
  - 19 Lot of
  - 20 India's wardrobe
  - 21 Gorge of the NFL
  - 22 Way to Rome
  - 23 "I" Having My Baby
  - 24 Toss and turn
  - 25 Stand open
  - 26 Arabian sultanate
  - 27 Italian legend
  - 28 Calvino or Balbo
  - 29 Piece of paper
  - 30 Squealer
  - 31 Capital of Vietnam
  - 32 All thumbs
  - 33 Inimacally
  - 34 Danybrook
  - 35 Jellied delicacy
  - 36 Specter of Pennsylvania
  - 37 Initiated
  - 38 Pictures in pictures
  - 39 Las Vegas draws
  - 40 Legal edies, casually
  - 41 Spanish rice dish
  - 42 Overturn
  - 43 Alabacore and bluelin
  - 44 Dropped the ball
  - 45 Rectify
  - 46 "My Cousin Vinny" Oscar-winner
  - 47 French water-bottler
  - 48 Go to
  - 49 Article of food
  - 50 Title role for Madonna
  - 51 Feel poorly
  - 52 Testmaker of note
  - 53 Pitcher
  - 54 Stottelmyre
  - 55 Toonies
  - 56 Iachin or Sagan
  - 57 Nexus
  - 58 Sacred story set to music
  - 59 Neon Sanders
  - 60 Inclined to weep
  - 61 Castor or Polux
  - 62 Colorful Asian fabrics
  - 63 New York river
  - 64 Went off course
  - 65 Turned
  - 66 Prepares to pray
  - 67 Wet sprays
  - 68 Emcoe's lead-in
  - 69 Guitar holder
  - 70 Family of fish
  - 71 Bad to the bone
  - 72 Crisereces framework
  - 73 Operatic voice
  - 74 Director Bunuel
  - 75 "Lohengrin" lady
  - 76 And so forth
  - 77 Lon... of Cambodia
  - 78 Stretch of time

Last Sunday's Crossword Solved

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24 Neighborhood  
25 Completely lacking sense  
26 Suffix used in chemistry  
27 Unwarp fruit  
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30 See it through

# France proposes allowing Iraq to import oil production equipments

(Continued from page 1)

would weaken the country's attempts to get the economic embargo lifted.

The Iraqi-U.N. oil-for-food agreement is the sole exception to the embargo imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Currently, Iraq is allowed under the programme to sell \$2 billion in crude every six months in order to

buy food and medicine, pay war reparations and fund U.N. disarmament inspections.

Some \$3.4 billion, or 70 per cent of the proposed total proceeds, would go for humanitarian needs in Iraq, Mr. Falt said.

"We would be disappointed if there was a negative reaction" from Iraq, said Mr. Falt, who maintained that Baghdad has not yet

officially responded to Mr. Annan's offer.

Western diplomats said in New York that a draft resolution providing for a sharp increase in an oil-for-food deal with Iraq was circulated among U.N. Security Council members Thursday.

The draft contains more generous proposals than those put forward by Mr. Annan, by adding an extra

\$50 million to finance the travel of Iraqi pilgrims to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

The draft, sponsored by Britain, Portugal and Sweden, provides for an increase to \$5.256 billion to pay for humanitarian supplies for the sanctions-hit Iraqi population.

The draft resolution is due to be discussed by the Security Council Monday.

## Bulletin lists Jordan's main trading partners

AMMAN (Petra) — A statistical bulletin released Friday by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply showed that Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Italy, the Palestinian self rule areas, Germany, the European Union, Egypt, and Sudan were Jordan's major 10 trading partners in 1997.

The bulletin, whose figures were based on statistics obtained from the import and export licences, showed that the volume of trade with those countries amounted to JD795 million in the past year compared with JD705 million in 1996.

According to the bulletin, Iraq topped the list of trading partners with Jordan as the volume of trade reached JD227 million followed by

Saudi Arabia and Syria which recorded JD118 million and JD91 million respectively.

Chemical products were on the top of the list of Jordanian exports to other countries as they accounted for JD 113 million in 1997 compared with JD124 million in 1996. Other Jordanian exports last year included among other things: electrical equipment and electrical appliances, foodstuffs, tobacco, alcoholic drinks, vegetable oil, live animals and paper related products.

The total trade from the ten aforementioned countries included export licences for a total of JD289 million and import licences for JD506 million.

## Arab, foreign investors buy JD2.7m worth of shares during January

AMMAN (Petra) — Non-Jordanians last month bought JD 2.7 million worth of shares but the amount was 0.9 per cent less than the volume posted during the same month of 1997, Jordan Securities Commission Chairman Michel Marto announced Friday.

Sales by non-Jordanians

last month amounted to JD 3.1 million compared to JD 4.5 million during the same month of last year according to Dr. Marto who noted that the total net investments by non-Jordanians in the Kingdom last month stood at JD 0.35 million compared to JD 0.88 million in January 1997.

## Head of McDonald's Middle East and Africa Promoted

MCDONALD'S INTERNATIONAL, the world's number one quick service restaurant chain, has announced the promotion of Timothy J. Fenton to Group Vice President and International Relationship Partner for the Middle East and Africa.

Mr. Fenton, who has been with the company for 24 years, has been Vice President/Managing Director of McDonald's Dubai-based Middle East Development Company (MEDC) for the past two years. MEDC covers McDonald's restaurant operations in Africa, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

With a staff of 21 professionals based in Dubai, MEDC coordinates marketing, purchasing, real estate, equipment and country operations. These functions have become self-sufficient, independent from the U.S. McDonald's.

Following his appointment Mr. Fenton will remain in MEDC's Dubai office overseeing the team which supports local licensees in 306 McDonald's restaurants in the region. The number is projected to increase to over 400 by the end of 1998, and to over 650 by the year 2000.

Commenting on the policy behind McDonald's successful global expansion, Mr. Fenton said: "We are a very conservative company. We've taken time to find the right partners and get the infrastructure in place first."

After taking up his new post, Mr. Fenton said he sees many challenges and prospects for McDonald's in the future. "Thirty-five million people eating McDonald's a day is less than two per cent of the world's population. So there's a lot of growth ahead," he said.

## Marto warns against issuing, offering securities without JSC approval

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan Securities Commission (JSC) Chairman Michel Marto Friday warned against issuing securities by foreign and offshore companies without the JSC permission.

"JSC law provides that any sale or solicitation in Jordan of the securities of such entities is illegal unless an offering document respecting the sale of the securities has been filed and approved by the JSC,"

said Dr. Marto.

The JSC chief was commenting on advertisements which appeared in local newspapers calling on Jordanians to buy shares in the Cyprus-based International Wealth Management Bond (IWMB), with a guaranteed nine per cent interest per annum.

"The JSC intervened advising the issuer that since its solicitations of investment in the security did not comply with the Securities Law of Jordan, the sale and solicitation of the security must terminate

immediately," added the JSC official.

"The commission has viewed with serious concern the unauthorised appearance of such advertisement," Dr. Marto said.

"In a number of instances, the issuers of the securities have not secured the approval of the JSC to the sale of the securities," added the JSC official.

"No foreign firm or no local company or bank in Jordan can offer shares for the public without our permission. Investing in such firms might put investors in

troubles," Dr. Marto told the Jordan Times.

He added that memos were sent on Thursday to the IWMB and the Central Bank of Cyprus "notifying them about the illegality of such practices without the JSC permission."

"We have our own regulations and rules which every foreign firm should abide by and respect," added Dr. Marto.

"This is a very serious matter and our citizens should be aware of these practices," said Dr. Marto.

## U.S. provides \$2m to support economic reform in Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — A U.S. government grant providing \$2 million to support economic reform projects in Jordan was signed Thursday at the Ministry of Planning by Rima Khalaf Huneidi, minister of planning, on behalf of the Government of Jordan, and by Lewis Lucke, director of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Jordan on behalf of the United States government.

This USAID funding agreement marks the beginning of a new four-year programme to support economic reform currently implemented by the Jordanian government. The activities

funded by this agreement focus on three main areas of interest, namely trade and investment, financial and legal reform, and privatisation.

Funds will be used to provide technical assistance and training to various Jordanian institutions to improve their ability to identify and implement key areas of policy reform and enhance Jordan's competitiveness in the global economy. This obligation represents the first of an anticipated \$140 million in grant funds which USAID will provide to Jordan this fiscal year.

## Independent public corporation to handle postal services in Jordan

By Issam Qadamani  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Transport and Telecommunications Minister Bassam Saket said Friday that post offices will be turned into a financially and administratively independent public corporation and that related laws and legislations will be amended accordingly.

Dr. Saket added that such changes aim at covering the expenses of extending postal services by raising prices of postal services.

"These changes do not aim at increasing profit but at covering costs of postal services extended to the citizens," said the minister.

Dr. Saket said the new system will not be operating on profit basis but

rather "to cover the costs of services that are currently extended free of charge to the citizens."

The minister said that the ministry has asked the international office of the World Postal Union to provide the ministry with a specialised expert to conduct the required studies.

He added that the office's general manager will pay a visit to the Kingdom soon and hold talks with senior Jordanian officials to discuss the ministry's needs for developing its postal services.

Dr. Saket said affiliating the postal offices to a public postal corporation will promote postal services and develop them at local and international levels.

## WTO urges Japan go for wider economic reform

GENEVA (R) — The World Trade Organisation (WTO) urged Japan on Wednesday to step up its programme of economic reforms so as to add zest to its domestic market and open up the country to foreign goods and services.

And in a report on Japanese trade policies, analysts in the WTO secretariat pointed to the need for change in the highly-protected agricultural sector as one of the key issues facing the national economy.

The analysts said some steps had been taken towards greater overall deregulation and structural reform since the last review — part of a series to which all the WTO's 132 members

are subjected — in 1995.

"However, these (steps) are still partial in scope and several sectors, including agriculture, construction and certain services, especially financial, remain subject to restrictive regulations," the report declared.

These, it said, "affect both foreign market access and better allocation of domestic resources."

"Firm continuation of the deregulation process would therefore be an essential element in stimulating the domestic market, as the authorities seek, and encouraging improved market access," the report declared.

The WTO analysts said Japan's agricultural productivity remained low, reflect-

ing the rapid ageing of the farming population and the extremely small average size of farms.

But the sector had largely been excluded from Japan's deregulation efforts, and over-production of rice — the staple crop and almost totally protected from cheaper foreign imports — was a chronic problem.

Agriculture, food manufacturing, textiles and footwear all enjoyed protection through high tariffs, and present tariff levels for fishery products, some wood products and petroleum remained unbound — meaning they can be raised at any time.

The report said that in services, which generate some 64 per cent of national gross domestic product and 68 per cent of employment, "concerns have been raised on the links that exist between complex regulations and low-productivity."

Partly as a result of global accords in the WTO on financial services and telecommunications, Japan was reducing traditional reliance on state intervention and control and opening up the sector to greater competition.

"However, unilateral reform measures... in air and maritime transport have been mainly confined to domestic services. Protective policies remain in some professional services," the report added.

## THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Lima's country
- 2 Lima's state
- 3 Sword stroke
- 4 Beasts of burden
- 5 Kart or Harpo
- 6 Painted pony
- 7 Squabble
- 8 Brit's indignant comment
- 9 Like Cheetos
- 10 Early greeting
- 11 Prudent
- 12 Eight: prof.
- 13 Three-bean or Waldorf, e.g.
- 14 Challenge
- 15 pump
- 16 Wardslips
- 17 "Damn Yankees" character
- 18 Old card game
- 19 Far from anyone
- 20 Actress Tilly
- 21 Ship's pole
- 22 Doubter of the New Testament
- 23 Tales to court
- 24 Poplar or pine, e.g.
- 25 Where the Po flows
- 26 Hebrew month
- 27 Bar between wheels
- 28 Manufacturer's cheapest
- 29 Speak one's mind
- 30 Muse of history
- 31 Inspiration
- 32 Land measurements
- 33 Berry and Norton
- 34 Building branches
- 35 Time charges
- 36 Epic tale
- 37 Depend

DOWN

- 1 Work station
- 2 Montreal ballplayer
- 3 Gather in
- 4 Improper
- 5 Chooses to exclude
- 6 Botched
- 7 Wrath of Caesar
- 8 Thunderous silence, e.g.
- 9 Wear
- 10 Jungle vines
- 11 Opposed to, at first?
- 12 Anna, the actress
- 13 Kong
- 14 Castro and others
- 15 South American cat
- 16 Actress Emma
- 17 French farewell
- 18 One of Nixon's running mates
- 19 Woodward
- 20 Muslim scholars
- 21 Upright
- 22 Rhyming verse
- 23 Partition of membrane
- 24 DATE
- 25 DIAL
- 26 LAMB
- 27 ELATE
- 28 ARLO
- 29 ALEE
- 30 JOKERS
- 31 WILD
- 32 USED
- 33 ATE
- 34 CONS
- 35 GIGOTS
- 36 CUBS
- 37 PITH
- 38 ASTORS
- 39 CONSTRUE
- 40 SPUMY
- 41 LONG
- 42 REDD
- 43 KIRI
- 44 FORDS
- 45 ALAS
- 46 ERIC
- 47 OLES
- 48 SCALE
- 49 DONSHULA
- 50 JEKYL
- 51 TARS
- 52 POLS
- 53 CAIRNS
- 54 REEL
- 55 GOT
- 56 ZUNI
- 57 TICKLE
- 58 PINK
- 59 ATOP
- 60 ACME
- 61 CISCO
- 62 ROINS
- 63 REPS
- 64 KATES
- 65 Some time
- 66 Thole adjuncts
- 67 Conrad Hilton, e.g.
- 68 Tangy
- 69 Dog dogger
- 70 Run without moving
- 71 Jodie Foster film
- 72 Banlu language
- 73 Gentling word

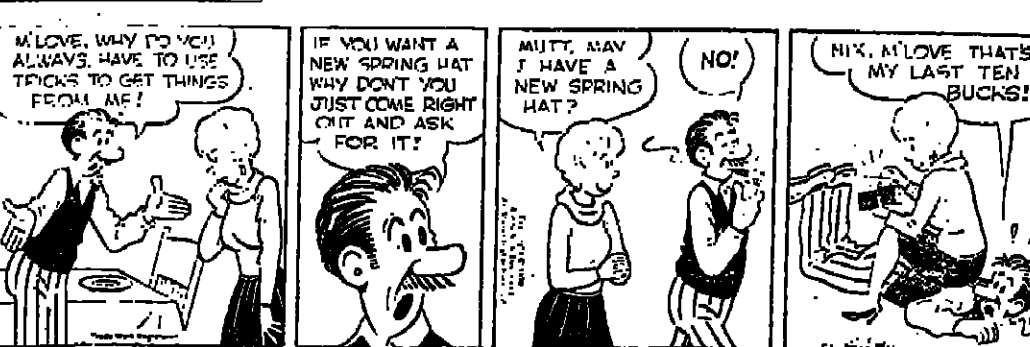
## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n' Jeff



## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) There's a good chance that you've got a cold. It's unusual for an Aries to get sick, so you may not recognise it. You may just be feeling lazy and beating yourself up about it. Stop that! You hereby have permission to stay in bed and watch TV. **TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) There's good information coming in today. Your mind is like a sponge, soaking up everything you can find. Don't waste your memory banks on trivia. Remember the old computer jargon about garbage in, garbage out? Well, stay away from the garbage dump today.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) There's money coming into your account today. You want to spend it on travel. If you're not careful, you might spend it on travel before you actually get the money. That is not usually a good idea, but today it could work. Have a great time while you're at it.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) People are noticing what you've been doing, and they're favourably impressed. Don't get a swelled head, though. What's more important is the money you're able to put in the bank. Do that first, before you go to the mall. Don't forget to stash some into a savings account you can't get at.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) There might be some serious shopping to do. Get a Cancer or Taurus friend to help with a big purchasing decision. You might wind up buying something that's damaged or used, but that's OK. Once you polish it up, nobody will know you paid half price for it.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) You could find yourself on a tour or a cruise or a volunteer committee. Think of whatever you like to do, then do it. It looks like there's service involved, which is not at all unusual for you. So get out and take care of others and you'll make a lot of great friends in the process.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Your assignment today is to provide what's required. Pay attention to what an older person needs and see if there's some way you can help. Good deeds you do now will be repaid to you later. That's not always the case, but this time it looks like a pretty even trade.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Travel and romance are the theme. In fact, you could be halfway across the country by now. Or you could travel via video, which would work just as well. And less chance of losing your luggage! Either way, you must have a romantic, exciting interlude. That's top priority no matter where you are.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Figure out how much money you've got and make up a list of all the stuff you need to buy, including educational expenses. Money from savings might even be used to buy new tools or equipment. That's OK. That's what you've been saving it for.

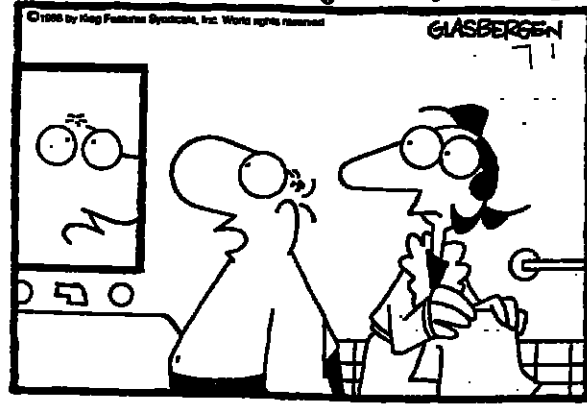
**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Sometimes you get so busy there's no time for affection. Well, there will be time today, if you make it happen. This doesn't have to be romantic love. It could be the love of a parent for a child, or the love of a kid for his dog. Whatever your object of affection, you need to let him or her know.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Investigate ways to save money. For example, if you have fruit trees, there's no reason you should ever have to buy fruit. There's work involved, but you can put up what you need for later. If that's a good analogy for you, think of a better one... and get busy!

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You're likely to get bold and outspoken this evening, probably in a romantic setting. So make a date with someone with whom you'd like to make a lifelong commitment. If you're already in a lifelong commitment with that person, so much the better.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

## THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



## JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

PLEEX  
HARCO  
TENTIK  
LOCSRL

GET YOUR ICE HERE

WHAT THE ICE-MAN DID WHEN SALES FELL OFF.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here:  HIS

Yesterday's Jumbles: BRAVO REBEL AWHILE RAREFY  
Answer: This is included in the cost of a ticket — AIR FARE



## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Industrialists agree to freeze measures to set up chamber of industry in Zarqa

AT A meeting held at the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI), Jordanian industrialists agreed to freeze the measures taken to establish a chamber of industry in Zarqa and other chambers in various governorates in order not to dissipate the Jordanian industrial effort. The industrialists stressed the need to rally around the ACI and called for forming a committee to formulate a draft law for a "Jordan Chamber of Industry."

The industrialists also agreed to postpone the ACI general assembly meeting scheduled for Sunday to a later date. Jamil Jubran, president of the society of investors at Sahab, affirmed the neutrality of the industrialists he represents and indicated that the society was only trying to mediate to arrive at a solution that would serve the interests of the Jordanian industry. Stressing that the industry is a one whole body that should be amputated, Mr. Jubran called for setting up a committee from neutral industrialists to formulate a working mechanism suitable for linking chambers of industry in the governorates and specify the form of relations with the ACI.

Mr. Jubran said obtaining a permission

to set up an independent chamber should not be considered as a bounty in as much as a major responsibility that concerns the unity of industrialists, taking into consideration the importance of giving a special status to the main central body.

Calling for a contemporary law that would reflect the wishes and unity of Jordanian industry, Mr. Jubran described the establishment of independent chambers of industry as a burden on the founders just like some entities that exist in the Kingdom. He emphasized the importance of dialogue and of frankness and stressed that industrial unity and structure should be implemented not only in words but in practical work.

Meanwhile, knowledgeable industrial sources said that 22 industrial establishments have applied to the Ministry of Industry and Trade to set up a chamber in Irbid. The sources questioned the timing for such applications noting that the law allows establishing chambers in the governorates since 1949. They pointed out that the requests will harm the industry as a whole and break up the efforts as well as the reference that was built over dozens of years (Al Arab Al Yawmi).

### Trading at AFM increases by 37% despite tension in the region

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Despite tension between Iraq and the United States over the inspection of mass destruction weapons, the turnover at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) has increased by 37.9 per cent in the last week compared with figures recorded in the preceding week, the AFM weekly bulletin indicated Friday.

The bulletin showed that the turnover amounted to JD4 million compared with JD2.9 million in the previous week and that the daily turnover was JD1 million.

The number of shares that changed hands totalled 2.6 million.

Naim Nageeb, a broker at the AFM, told the Jordan Times that calm prevailed in the first three days of the week as a result of fear from a possible strike against Iraq.

But trading activities improved remarkably on Wednesday when Iraq reportedly agreed to allow U.N. inspectors to enter presidential palaces. Mr. Nageeb said.

The broker indicated that the major reason that affected the turnover was the "transfer of Jordan Cement Company's (JCC) shares from and to foreign investors." He added that despite the demand for the JCC's shares, "the prices of its shares declined because supply exceeded demand."

Services sector came third

with JD660,000 or 16.6 per cent and finally the insurance sector with JD100,000 or 0.1 per cent of the turnover.

The bulletin indicated that the general share price index has dropped from 166.8 point a week ago to 166.6 point, or 0.2 point.

Out of the 81 firms that changed hands during the last week activities, prices of 23 firms recorded increase, 42 companies registered decrease while 16 firms witnessed no change.

Most of the AFM activities took place on Wednesday, said the broker.

Mr. Nageeb said that demand was also registered for the shares of the Kingdom's leading financial institution, the Arab Bank.

He said that most of the AFM activities had focused on the industrial sector, with a turnover accounting to 43 per cent or JD1.7 million followed by banking sector with JD1.6 million, or 40 per cent.

Services sector came third

with JD660,000 or 16.6 per cent and finally the insurance sector with JD100,000 or 0.1 per cent of the turnover.

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## REUTERS • REUTERS •

### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7873	0.8068	1.4507	123.82	1.4303	1776.70	2.0270	6.0266
OE Mark	0.5664	1.0000	0.3367	0.6071	68.76	0.7955	987.44	1.2588	3.3504
GB Sterling	1.6506	2.9659	1.0000	1.2943	204.21	2.3609	2831.02	3.3439	9.9419
CH Franc	0.6893	1.2358	0.4172	1.0000	65.28	0.8851	1223.03	139.57	4.1813
JP Yen	0.0081	1.4510	0.4888	1.1710	1.0000	1.1546	14.32	163.64	4.8554
CA Dollar	0.6992	1.2479	0.4186	1.0112	1.15	1.2319	1.4069	4.1831	1.1931
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0118	0.3408	0.8817	1435.96	0.8950	11.40	3.3911	1.1931
NL Guilder	0.4933	88.72	0.2868	71.60	61.07	0.7058	875.45	1.2937	1.1931
FR Franc	0.1658	0.2982	0.1005	24.0685	20.52	0.2373	33.61	33.6100	1.1931

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	3.6410	0.3047	3.6727	1528.00	3.4125
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2888	0.5317	5.1354	0.4288	5.1801	2156.15	4.8731
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.8012	0.98	407.41	0.8989
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8808	9.9491	1.0000	9.68	0.8083	9.74	405.37	9.0524
Qatar Dinar	0.2746	0.1947	1.0301	1.0301	1.0000	0.8037	1.01	419.67	0.9372
Kuwait Dinar	3.2819	2.3268	12.3088	1.2372	11.95	1.2205	604.77	0.9372	1.1931
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0212	0.9914	0.8030	1.01	419.67	0.9372
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4640	2.4545	0.2467	2.3829	0.1994	2.4036	1.1931	1.1931
Egyptian	0.2930	0.2078	1.0990	0.1105	1.0670	0.0893	1.0762	447.77	1.1931

Energy					Mid-East Currencies				
Oil	Last	Previous	Oil	Previous	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY
Brent	14.95	14.93	SA Riyal	0.2666	0.2666	0.4793	0.18154	0.38704	33.0308
WT Texas	16.72	16.80	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.2723	0.48952	0.16486	0.39624	33.7302
Bonny	14.95	14.93	KW Dinar	3.2819	2.3268	1.98847	4.78417	406.504	1.1931
Dubai	12.73	12.63	BH Dinar	0.3770	0.3770	4.78872	1.6072	3.8508	328.623
UL Gas	160.00	160.00	CY Pound	1.8866	3.3908	1.1422	2.7371	233.549	1.1931

Metal Prices				Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)				
Metal	Bid	Offer	Period	1 -	3 -	6 -	9 -	1 -
Gold (oz's)	299.2	299.7	Cy's	Month	Month	Month	Month	Year
Silver (oz's)	7.44	7.49	USD	5.50	5.50	5.53	5.50	5.53
Platinum (oz's)	398	400	GBP	7.38	7.37	7.37	7.25	7.37
AL (3 Months)	1519	1522	JPY	0.41	1.12	0.68	0.50	0.50
CU (3 Months)	1710	1713	DEM	3.39	3.44	3.38	3.44	3.83
Zinc (3 Months)	1102	1105	FRF	3.74	3.47	3.56	3.64	3.72
Lead (3 Months)	537	538	CHF	1.00	1.08	1.18	1.30	1.48
Ni (3 Months)	5520	5540	ITL	6.12	6.02	5.69	6.39	5.13

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	8195.47	78.22	0.95	8204.69	8113.02	8117.25	8117.25	8117.25
New York	S&P 500	1010.01	6.47	0.64	1011.49	1003.38	1003.54	1003.54	1003.54
London	FT-SE 100	5621.1	14.7	0.26	5622.4	5566.2	5606.4	5606.4	5606.4
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	17040.06	36.76	0.22	17133.9	16880.9	17003.3	17003.3	17003.3
Paris	CAC 40	3216.66	27.06	0.85	3232.46	3173	3189.5	3189.5	3189.5
Frankfurt	DAX	4496.33	52.13	1.15	4530.61	4492.61	4548.46	4548.46	4548.46

Energy				JOD Cross Rates			
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Coffee (c/lbs)	183.25	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (s/ton)	1697	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1693	1.1761	1.1693	1.1761
Sugar (s/ton)	284.7	Spot	DE Mark	0.3922	0.3942	0.3922	0.3942
Wheat (s/ton)	0	Spot	CH Franc	0.4889	0.4891	0.4889	0.4891
Soya (c/lbs)	25.65	Spot	FR Franc	0.1171	0.1177	0.1171	0.1177
Tea (stg/kg)	225	Spot	JP Yen	0.6705	0.6735	0.6705	0.6735
Barley (s/ton)	400	Spot	NL Guilder	0.348	0.3497	0.348	0.3497
Rice (s/ton)	400	Spot	IT Lira	0.3972	0.3992	0.3972	0.3992

\* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET															
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARJAH															
TELEPHONE: 40171 / 40119															
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (31/01/1998 - 04/02/1998)															
WEEKLY REPORT															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS															
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	TURNOVER MARKET SHARES	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
332.000	117.000	ARAB BANK	15.1	1.22	25	2500	819500	329.00	329.00	329.00	329.00	-	327.836	-057	2
1.820	1.770	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	-	0.00	84	272490	485900	1.80	1.79	1.71	1.74	-06	1.783	-649	6
1.470	1.420	BANK OF JORDAN	4.3	0.00	14	5087	7130	1.46	1.46	1.37	1.37	-09	1.402	-022	3
1.000	0.950	NID. EAST INV. BK.	67.0	0.00	4	2075	3075	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.02	-02	1.000	-021	1
1.740	1.690	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.3	0.00	26	48230	81694	1.70	1.72	1.69	1.72	-02	1.699	-279	4
5.200	4.150	THE HOUSING BK.	15.4	3.72	18	2361	122755	5.15	5.22	5.10	5.22	-07	5.147	-095	2
2.040	1.980	JOR. REALITY BANK	10.5	0.00	10	2641	5227	2.00	2.00	1.97	1.97	-03	1.979	-018	3
1.670	1.620	JOR. GULF BANK	4.0	10.26	35	39197	26111	1.66	1.70	1.66	1.66	-02	1.663	-157	3
2.480	2.430	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	11.8	4.14	39	13716	27911	2.38	2.38	2.31	2.31	-06	2.348	-070	4
1.080	1.030	UNION NID. INV.	14.7	0.00	1	500	525	1.06	1.05	1.05	1.05	-01	1.050	-003	1
2.100	2.050	JOR. INV. PIP. BANK	18.0	0.00	3	500	328	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	-12	2.107	-002	1
2.180	1.970	JOR. INV. PIP. BANK/NEW	-	0.00	3	500	328	1.97	1.97	1.87	1.87	-10	1.875	-002	1
1.500	1.450	RETAIL AL. HAL. (BETINA)	16.6	16.67	9	3050	2720	1.48	1.48	1.47	1.47	-02	1.482	-153	2
MARKETS SECTOR															
242 411793 1580169 INDEX NUMBER : 232.54 CHANGE : - 0.227															
2.150	2.100	JORDAN INSURANCE	11.4	5.56	1	1200	3240	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	-	2.100	-024	1
1.120	1.070	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	1.50	1	500	1000	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	-	1.040	-023	1
1.800	1.750	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	7.4	6.97	1	320	562	1.80	1.83	1.82	1.83	-03	1.819	-015	1
INSURANCE SECTOR															
5 2020 4022 INDEX NUMBER : 120.14 CHANGE : - 0.052															
1.950	1.920	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	4.93	158	12184	242831	1.94	2.05	1.94	2.03	-09	1.994	-811	4
1.070	1.015	NATL. PORTFOLIO	0.00	0.00	40	23600	24001	1.04	1.03	1.00	1.02	-02	1.017	-472	6
1.470	1.410	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	26.4	0.00	1	250	120	1.47	1.47	1.46	1.46	-01	1.460	-007	1
0.380	0.300	ALMA 1	15.0	5.95	1	2000	14800	0.33	0.40	0.40	0.40	-20	0.400	-100	1
1.200	1.180	NID. EAST HOTELS	18.4	0.00	9	2100	2523	1.20	1.21	1.21	1.21	-01	1.201	-041	4
4.000	3.920	ARAB INTL. LIFE ASS.	10.1	0.00	18	14122	56372	3.92	3.98	3.92	3.95	-07	3.950	-139	3
1.990	1.940	JORDAN LEAT. INV.	0.00	0.00	7	5550	4728	1.90	1.90	1.89	1.89	-01	1.892	-111	2
1.960	1.910	JOR. EDUCATION	0.00	0.00	2	2250	2095	1.95	1.94	1.93	1.94	-01	1.931	-050	1
1.760	1.680	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	6.55	3	750	1265	1.72	1.69	1.68	1.68	-04	1.687	-015	2
1.700	1.700	UNION LAND DEV.	-	0.00	6	2220	1831	1.70	1.66	1.63	1.63	-07	1.665	-044	3
SERVICES SECTOR															
241 174528 350164 INDEX NUMBER : 116.87 CHANGE : - 0.232															
1.160	1.140	ATTARDEED	-	0.00	3	4450	5127	1.16	1.16	1.15	1.15	-01	1.152	-159	1
1.170	1.170	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.5	3.79	72	221730	651924	3.02	3.00	2.90	2.90	-12	2.914	-370	4
3.650	3.600	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	10.1	2.74	7	5285	19026	3.60	3.65	3.60	3.65	-05	3.600	-012	1
5.850	5.450	ARAB PETROL CO.	14.0	3.33	3	2000	1480	5.45	5.75	5.62	5.75	-10	5.600	-000	2
10.150	10.100	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.0	8.44	30	3355	34638	10.40	10.35	10.28	10.29	-11	10.324	-052	3
5.700	5.500	JORDAN TANNING	6.7	5.45	4	1095	5996	5.55	5.50	5.50	5.50	-05	5.476	-310	2
1.190	1.150	INDUSTRIAL COMM. ACB.	-	6.00	8	1068	1836	1.38	1.36	1.34	1.35	-03	1.345	-021	3
6.980	6.980	JOR. WORSTEDS MILLS	10.7	3.02	1	100	663	6.98	6.63	6.63	6.63	-35	6.630	-003	1
4.170	4.250	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	12.1	4.55	82	33228	144910	4.36	4.41	4.30	4.40	-04	4.361	-369	4
2.830	2.800	JORDAN DAIRY	9.4	8.73	100	280	1000	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	-	2.800	-006	1
8.000	8.000	RAPID INDUSTRIES	-	0.00	1	100	80	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	-	8.000	-007	1
5.690	5.640	DAP ALMAHA. DR. INV.	14.2	4.31	16	38650	220373	5.75	5.80	5.70	5.80	-05	5.702	-644	3
7.410	7.350	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.37	1	1250	3013	7.39	7.41	7.41	7.41	-02	7.410	-021	1
1.460	1.460	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	7.3	0.00	40	16800	2288	1.45	1.44	1.43	1.44	-01	1.434	-509	3
1.700	1.700	ARAB PAPER CON. TRD.	22.3	0.00	2	2400	1752	1.70	1.71	1.71	1.71	-03	1.700	-069	2
1.050	1.050	NATIONAL IND.	6.00	2.00	2	400	228	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	-07	1.050	-007	1
1.660	1.610	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	-	0.00	30	13650	5627	1.62	1.62	1.60	1.62	-	1.612	-341	4
1.670	1.630	UNIV. CHEM. INDUS.	12.9	6.99	8	4743	6872	1.63	1.65	1.63	1.63	-	1.649	-536	3
1.180	1.180	JOR. CABLE WIRE. MPAC	26.0	0.00	4	450	493	1.07	1.14	1.08	1.08	-01	1.096	-006	1
1.450	1.450	JOR. SUPPLY. CHEM.	15.4	5.79	9	3100	554	1.45	1.48	1.45	1.45	-	1.454	-214	3
1.120	1.110	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	15.4	5.79	9	3100	1712	1.22	1.21	1.18	1.21	-01	1.197	-062	3
1.910	1.840	UNIV. MOOD. INDUS.	378.2	2.26	107	64550	53189	1.85	1.84	1.82	1.83	-02	1.824	-1076	4
1.750	1.710	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	10.1	13.33	17	16629	12138	1.75	1.75	1.71	1.75	-	1.730	-208	4
1.500	1.450	NATL. CHLORINE	14.0	4.70	3	1650	2475	1.50	1.50	1.49	1.49	-01	1.500	-021	2
1.900	1.900	JOR. REM. CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	21	14525	1806	1.90	1.90	1.89	1.89	-	1.899	-102	3
1.450	1.450	RETAIL AL. HAL. (BETINA)	16.6	16.67	9	3050	2720	1.45	1.45	1.45	1.45	-	1.450	-000	2
1.210	1.180	INTL. TOBACCO	6.6	0.00	12	20250	24130	1.21	1.20	1.16	1.20	-01	1.192	-202	2
1.020	1.020	UNION CH. & WEG.	46.4	0.00	13	67250	67260	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	-04	1.000	-1494	2
1.740	1.700	JORDAN STEEL	31.2	7.25	11	8850	6125	1.70	1.70	1.69	1.69	-01	1.692	-059	3
1.670	1.600	MID-EAST COMPLEX	7.5	16.39	24	166950	106460	1.62	1.64	1.61	1.61	-01	1.609	-759	3
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR															
599 752418 1462544 INDEX NUMBER : 110.54 CHANGE : 0.077															
GRAND TOTAL															
1107 1343259 3383699 INDEX NUMBER : 166.63 CHANGE : - 0.122															
NO. OF DAYS TRADED : 4															
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADING VOLUME : JD 845,925															
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADED SHARES : 325,815															
DAILY AVERAGE OF CONTRACTS : 277															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS															
HIGH	LOW	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	TURNOVER MARKET SHARES	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
1.050	1.010	EXPORT & FIN. BNA. 75/	-	0.00	11	16200	12144	1.01	1.00	0.99	1.00	-01	1.000	-081	3
1.340	1.310	CENTRAL GLS. TOBACCO	-	0.00	1	500	160	1.31	1.32	1.32	1.32	-01	1.320	-015	1
1.480	1.460	JOR. TRADE FACT.	9.9	0.00	43	155550	56593	1.47	1.47	1.46	1.47	-01	1.464	-374	4
1.560	1.540	FIN. INVEST. CO.	46.1	0.00	118	400115	224582	1.53	1.59	1.59	1.59	-06	1.561	-400	4
1.710	1.700	UNION INV. 50/	-	0.00	24	103750	21286	1.71	1.71	1.70	1.70	-01	1.700	-472	3
1.940	1.970	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	330.9	0.00	2	5100	4694	1.94	1.94	1.92	1.94	-	1.920	-057	1
1.930	1.880	ARAB JOR. INVEST. CO.	-	0.00	2	1000	990	1.92	1.90	1.90	1.90	-08	1.900	-010	2
1.290	1.290	SPECIALIZED JOR. 75/	-	0.00	1	500	425	1.05	1.10	1.10	1.10	-05	1.080	-013	1
1.460	1.470	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	31.1	0.00	12	10750	2120	1.46	1.48	1.47	1.47	-01	1.472	-212	2
1.120	1.150	JOR. INDUS. MATCH. 75/	-	0.00	1	5000	600	1.14	1.16	1.16	1.16	-	1.160	-294	1
1.670	1.630	MIDEAST PHARM. 90/	-	0.00	6	1344	736	1.65	1.64	1.64	1.64	-01	1.640	-014	3
1.360	1.360	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	-	0.00	6	750	360	1.50	1.49	1.47	1.47	-03	1.480	-013	1
1.720	1.760	1.360 UNION TOBACCO 75/	-	0.00	6	1389	1539	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	-	1.760	-028	3
1.610	1.680	RAST PHARM.	-	0.00	17	36850	27564	1.71	1.72	1.71	1.71	-	1.710	-369	4
1.810	1.750	ADVANCED PHARMA. IND.	-	0.00	52	34358	19412	1.59	1.58	1.56	1.56	-03	1.565	-829	4
1.790	1.760	INDS. ENG.	-	0.00	6	2250	612	1.28	1.28	1.27	1.28	-	1.272	-032	3
1.680	1.570	INDS. CHROMIC	14.4	0.00	8	2750	1525	1.57	1.55	1.55	1.55	-02	1.555	-068	2
1.480	1.480	PEARL SAN. P. COMV.	-	0.00	2	350	161	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46	-02	1.460	-009	1
1.520	1.520	IND. POULTRY	-	0.00	16	13650	7305	1.54	1.56	1.55	1.55	-01	1.535	-127	2
1.050	1.090	OPTICALS HEARING 75/	-	0.00	3	20050	8219	1.09	1.06	1.06	1.06	-04	1.041	-827	2
1.050	1.000	READY MIX CONCRETE	14.8	0.00	29	24600	29186	1.01	1.23	1.06	1.23	-22	1.186	-820	4
1.080	1.070	INT. ALUMINIUM. 75/	93.0	0.00	11	15700	6594	1.07	1.07	1.07	1.07	-	1.070	-131	3
1.000	1.000	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	50.8	0.00	2	500	525	1.00	1.05	1.02	1.05	-05	1.038	-008	1
1.110	1.110	RUTLEDGE	0.00	0.00	30	10750	18794	1.13	1.11	1.09	1.09				



# Nagano put to the test as Winter Games begin today

NAGANO (AFP) — For 16 days from Saturday, the Japanese city of Nagano must try to match the Norwegian enthusiasm and efficiency which four years earlier made the Winter Olympics of Lillehammer so enormously successful.

Japanese Emperor Akihito will open the 18th Winter Games at a colourful extravaganza but as International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch admitted it will not be the opening ceremony that will be the litmus test for the city.

If the buses grind to a halt, as they did at the Atlanta Summer Games in 1996, or if the Japanese fans are unable to shed their politeness and embrace the occasion with the same wholehearted spontaneity as the Norwegians, then Nagano will be written off as just another Games.

True, these are the biggest. They have attracted a record 72 countries, 2,450 competitors, which include a record 827 women, and 68 medal events, of which there are three new sports

— curling — or lawn bowls on ice — women's hockey and snowboarding, the sport the Californian surfers took to the mountains.

But like Albertville in 1992, this rather nondescript city lacks an Olympic soul. Some striking sports arena are plonked down in drab neighbourhoods.

However, if you take the 50km ride to Hakuba, where the skiing is being held, you step into another world.

Luckily for Nagano, the weather gods answered their prayers and drove away El Nino. The snow came down to allow the ski venues to put on a picture postcard display.

However, the real test comes in Sunday's men's downhill, the Winter Olympic blue ribbon event, which was the cause of a four-year battle between the ski federation and local environmentalists.

The Nagano organising committee, which had backed the greens, finally bowed in December to stretch the men's course into a protected natural park.

Another hazard for these Games is the middle East conflict between the United States and Iraq.

Samaranch may regret going to the United Nations last November and asking countries to observe an Olympic truce because the spectre of Saddam Hussein is now hovering threateningly over Japan.

The U.S. Olympic Committee, fearing a U.S. air strike of Baghdad on February 17, have asked American forces stationed in Japan to come to their aid if necessary.

U.S. Olympic Committee executive director Dick Schultz said some of the 47,000 U.S. troops based in Japan could be deployed if the Nagano Organising Committee (NAOC) and the Japanese government gave approval.

"If this became a major situation and there was a security problem then with the approval of NAOC and the government we can ask for such protection," said Schultz.

Japanese authorities imposed even tighter security

arrangements in Nagano after two small motors were fired into the cargo area at Tokyo-Narita airport on Monday.

But hosting the Games means money — spending it.

The ghost of Atlanta's technological foul-ups helped push the operational budget for Nagano beyond the 100 billion yen (\$790 million) mark.

The total investment is estimated at 1,650 billion yen (\$13.8 billion), including costs of super-fast rail and road links, with the central government picking up just a half of the tab for Olympic facilities.

But, 26 years after Sapporo staged a Winter Olympics that were recognised as super smooth, Nagano's efforts should come to fruition when a record 160 countries tune in to Olympic coverage.

If the right image comes across, Nagano have a winner. If not — a humiliating loss of face for the most southerly city ever to host a Winter Olympics.

## Albert — the prince of bobsleigh in Nagano

NAGANO (AFP) — Here's a sure-fire Trivial Pursuits question for the next edition — who was the only International Olympic Committee member to compete in the 1998 Winter Olympics.

Answer — Albert Grimaldi, or as he is better known, Prince Albert of Monaco.

The 39-year-old member of the IOC will be piloting the four-man bobsleigh for the Monaco team. It's his fourth successive Winter Olympics, but there is little chance he will emulate his grandfather, John B. Kelly, who won gold medals in sculling at the 1920 and 1924 Summer Olympics.

Kelly was the father of film star Grace Kelly who married Prince Rainier in a union between showbiz and royalty. Grace Kelly died in a car accident in 1956.

Prince Albert's best recorded finish in a major event was 19th in the 1996 European Championships but he qualified for the Olympics by coming fourth in the America Cup series.

A member of the IOC since 1985, Prince Albert is not shy about revealing his occupation in his official biography posted on the Nagano information system. He's, quite simply, "heir to the throne of Monaco."

## Daredevil American to attempt quadruple lutz

NAGANO (AFP) — American skater Michael Weiss is to attempt to be the first to do a quadruple lutz in competition at the Nagano Olympics next week.

The 21-year-old has done the jump regularly in practice and was nearly successful in competition at the U.S. championships last month.

"I am definitely going to try and get the 'quad lutz' this time," said Weiss. "I think I am doing well enough to pull it off and it would certainly get me noticed by the judges."

The quad lutz is far more difficult than the quadruple toe-loop which a handful of men's skaters now do. The takeoff and landing are both backwards.

"The pressure is on a lot of other people to do well, so I am just going to go out there and have fun," said Weiss.

Weiss is America's number two behind Todd Eldredge, and an outsider in the men's stakes behind Canada's Elvis Stojko, the first to perform a quad toe loop in competition in 1991.

The daring Stojko said Thursday he was not yet ready to try a quad lutz at an Olympics but will again feature a quad toe-loop.

Russian title challengers Ilia Kulik and Alexei Yagudin also perform the quad.

Of the main contenders, Eldredge is the only one not to have a quad in his arsenal. When asked if he would try it in Nagano, Eldredge said: "Wait and see."

"It went well in practice today so who knows."



Kristi Yamaguchi of the U.S. is cheered on by a crowd as she arrives with one of the Olympic torches in Nagano February 6. Three Olympic torches arrived in Nagano after being carried through the 46 prefectures of Japan on its journey to the site of the XVIII Winter Olympic Games and the flames were united in a ceremony today (Reuters photo)

## Winter Games looking for new sports

NAGANO (AFP) — Olympic leaders want to expand the Winter Games but cannot find new sports that fit the bill.

International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch made a new plea for candidates Friday but admitted it would not be easy.

There are 14 sports for the Nagano Games, for which curling and women's hockey are new full medal competitions.

But Samaranch said he did not know if new events could be found for the Salt Lake City Games in 2002.

"It is not easy to find new sports for the Olympic Games but we have room," he said.

Under IOC rules winter sports have to be played on snow or ice. Prospective applicants also have to be played in at least 50 nations in three continents.

Cyclo-cross has been named as one potential candidate but it is held mainly on mud. The IOC also considered switching table-tennis from the summer to winter games.

## Tara to escape Olympic spotlight and rivals

NAGANO (AFP) — World women's skating champion Tara Lipinski is leaving the Nagano Olympic village to escape the spotlight and her main rival Michelle Kwan.

The petite but precocious 15-year-old said Friday she had achieved one dream by coming to Nagano but the next one "is to win."

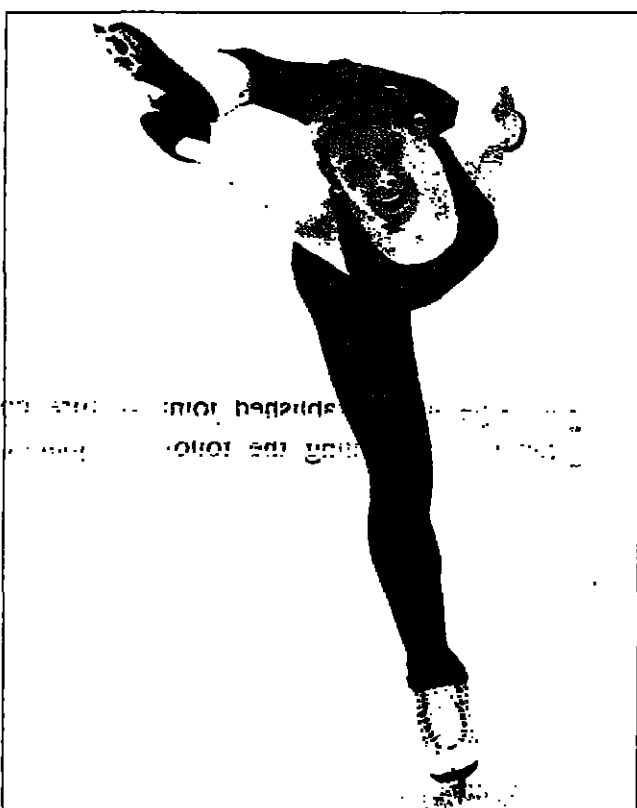
There has been little love lost between Lipinski and Kwan since last year, when Lipinski took the world title from Kwan, who won it in 1996 when she was 15.

Kwan and the third American women's contender Nicole Bobek have not yet arrived in Japan and so were not at the U.S. skaters' press conference.

"Between me and Michelle, everyone has been talking about it," said Lipinski.

"I think we just go out there and try and skate our best. The only thing we have in common is we want the same thing: the gold medal."

The U.S. sporting authorities are anxious to play down any rivalry that could bring back memories of the Tonya



United States world champion figure skater Tara Lipinski skates during practice at the White Ring arena (Reuters photo)

Harding-Nancy Kerrigan Winter Olympics battle that clouded the last But Lipinski will, conve-

niently, not have to meet her teammate until competition starts on February 18. She is leaving to train in Osaka after Saturday's opening ceremony, saying it will be "more relaxing" in the western city.

Lipinski, Kwan and Bobek, 20, are considered serious medal contenders and many Americans are counting on all three medals.

"The sweep is possible and if it happens it would be great for the U.S.," said Lipinski.

Kwan returned from an injury layoff to take the U.S. title in brilliant style in January with near-perfect routines.

But Lipinski, the tiny tot of the skating rink — just 1.47m tall and 35kg in weight — signalled she has no intention of giving up the gold medal without a fight. She is also supremely confident in her own undoubted talent.

"Since I made the Olympic team at the nationals, I'm here and I've made it. I've done the toughest thing and now it is all downhill," declared the teenager.

## Cuche blows open battle for downhill gold

NAGANO (AFP) — A 23-year-old Swiss who won his first ever World Cup race only two weeks ago has, blown open the Olympic downhill which will be run here on Sunday.

When Didier Cuche was fastest during Friday's practice he proved that his win in Kitzbuhel in January was more than simply a one-off and that he is a real contender to knock the mighty Austrians off the podium.

"This piste suits me. It has everything to be a good downhill. Come Sunday it will be faster, we will fly further. A real good test," said Cuche, hoping to give Switzerland their first Olympic downhill title since Pirmin Ziegler in 1988 in Calgary.

But despite Cuche's form Austria's Hermann Maier remains the number one choice to win the Games' blue ribbon event. The 25-year-old from Flachau only joined the powerful and talent-laden Austrian team in 1996 after almost a decade in the wilderness but has since become the sensation of the World Cup circuit.

Maier earned the first victory of his World Cup career in January, 1997, in a super-giant slalom in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

That was a mere foretaste of his form in

the current World Cup campaign, where he began with a podium place at the Tignes, France, giant slalom followed by victories in a GS at Park City, Utah, and a super-giant slalom at Beaver Creek, Colorado in early December. He has now chalked up nine wins.

In his first run down the piste during Thursday's opening official practice Maier finished third and promptly dismissed his gold medal chances.

"The piste is too flat. It's too easy," said the skier nicknamed Hermann the Monster.

"My advantage is when it is steeper. Much more difficult," he added.

But 24 hours later, after the second practice session, the former bricklayer was not so quick to write off his chances.

However, Maier remains convinced that the gold is bound for the all powerful Austrian team who have won three-quarters of all World Cup races this season.

"My friend Andreas Schifferer must be favourite. This piste really suits him," said Maier.

Defending champion Tommy Moe, who has failed to win a race since his stunning upset in Lillehammer, started 33rd in the order for the first practice and found himself still in 33rd spot at the finish.

He finished 26th after the second run.

But the 26-year-old, whose birthday is in less than two weeks, is still raring to go after overcoming major knee and wrist injuries over the past four seasons.

"It's great. I'm really excited to be here. It's nice to race in Japan and the weather is perfect. Overall it's a great course and it's got a good rhythm and great jumps. I've just got to look for speed for Sunday," he enthused.

Norway's 1994 World Cup champion Kjetil Andre Aamodt is another downhill who could upset the Austrian Eagles.

The Norwegian team is hoping he will be galvanised by returning to Japan where he won two gold medals and one silver when the 1993 world championships were held at Morioka.

Teammate Lasse Kjus, fully recovered after being laid low for most of January with the flu, is coming back into form and looking to add to his gold medal in the combined that he won four years ago.

Also at the forefront of the battle to stop an Austrian clean-sweep are Italy's Peter Runggaldier and Canadian Brian Stemmle. Stemmle, hoping to be the first ever Canadian Olympic downhill champion, rejected claims that the course was too short to be a real Olympic downhill.



Norwegian snowboarder Danile Franck is airborne during practice at Shiga Kogen February 6. The XVIII Winter Olympics begin on February 7 (Reuters photo)

## Winter sport's 'wild ones' go legit

NAGANO (AFP) — Winter sport's 'wild ones' will take on a new air of respectability when the Nagano Olympics begin today.

The rebellious sport that took surfing from the waves and firmly dumped it on snow clad mountains only 30 years ago has become legitimate.

But the 'let's party' attitude that saw thousands of kids take to the slopes is still simmering. "We are still less formal than the other sports. Where there are boarders there is fun," says French boarder Nicolas Conte, one of the favourites to win gold in the giant slalom.

Arch-rival Martin Freinademetz of Austria projects the classic image of the boarder: coloured beard, long hair, baggy trousers, long shirts, jamaican styled hats and a taste for funky music.

But the 28-year-old Austrian admits that the sport has changed from the early days.

"The times have changed. The good old days when we only wanted to have fun are gone. For the younger generation, the competition comes before the fun," said Freinademetz, who will wear practical, specially designed competition wear instead of his favoured 'baggy look'.

"Certainly it is everybody's dream to win a medal and to reach the Olympics but in former days this wasn't important for us. We were only a group of crazy guys striking for adventure and partying. But joining the Olympic Games for the first time means a big challenge for all boarders," he added wistfully.

But while snowboarding may have begun as a rebel sport, the competition at Nagano will be fierce as money pours into the sport and careers are made.

Apart from Freinademetz and Conte in the giant slalom, Ueli Kestenholz, current world champion Thomas Prugger of Italy and

American Mike Jacoby are pushing for the gold.

Jacoby has won the World Cup giant slalom title twice and was considering withdrawing from competitive skiing, until the Olympic door opened.

"I've had a lot of success and thrills in competing around the world but it would be awesome if I could win Olympic gold," said the 28-year-old who enjoys nothing more than leaping out of helicopters with a snowboard to freeride down a mountainside.

It will be an equally tough battle in the women's giant slalom.

American Sandra Van Erp is the reigning world champion. At 33, she is almost prehistoric in a sport dominated by youth but she knows the Nagano slopes. She won her first World Cup competition here in 1996.

Europe's challenge will come from France's Karine Ruby and Italy's Margherita Parini. Ruby is a consistent winner on the tour and took the silver medal in the world championships.

Parini took the bronze. In the halfpipe competition, an ariel free-fall that tests courage to the maximum, Europe is looking to dominate.

Switzerland boasts two world champions, Fabien Rober and Anita Schwallier but Rober will have to fend off Sweden's Fredrik Sterner and Jacob Soderqvist, both men looked at the top of the points table for the halfpipe World Cup.

Also expected to be on the podium is Canada's Tara Teigen who won the World Cup points title in 1996-97.

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	<b>THE PEACEMAKER</b>	<b>GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE</b>	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Shows: 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	<b>HOME ALONE 3</b>	Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas
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			Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30			



## Nets upset Suns; Hawks win

**EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (AP)** — Kerry Kittles scored 16 of his 20 points in the second and third quarters as the New Jersey Nets opened a 23-point lead en route to a 106-94 victory over the Phoenix Suns Thursday night.

The win was the Nets' 27th of the season, surpassing their total for last season. It also snapped the Suns' four-game winning streak, but Phoenix still had a successful 5-2 road trip heading into the All-Star break.

Jason Kidd had 12 points, eight rebounds and four assists for the Nets, who lost for only the third time in their last 12 games.

**Toronto Raptors 93; Dallas Mavericks 93:** At Toronto, Damon Stoudamire had 21 points, eight assists and seven rebounds as the Toronto Raptors rallied to hand the Dallas Mavericks their 20th straight road loss.

Oliver Miller added 17 points for Toronto, which ended a three-game losing streak. Marcus Camby had 16 rebounds and 10 points for the Raptors.

Michael Finley led Dallas with 19 points.

**Charlotte Hornets 108, Vancouver Grizzlies 93:** At Charlotte, North Carolina, Glen Rice scored 30 points as Charlotte defeated Vancouver before what appeared to be the smallest home crowd in the Hornets' 10-year history.

With top-ranked Duke playing No. 2 North Carolina in a college game about 240 kilometres away in Chapel Hill, only about 14,000-15,000 fans showed up at Charlotte Coliseum, which holds 24,042.

**Orlando Magic 93, Washington Wizards 83:** At Orlando, Florida, Nick Anderson had 18 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists to lead the Magic.



New Jersey Nets guard Sam Cassell (L) tries to clear out Phoenix Suns forward Mark Bryant in the second period of their NBA game February 5 at the Meadowlands Arena in East Rutherford (Reuters photo)

to lead the Orlando Magic over the Washington Wizards.

Mark Price scored 16 points and Bo Outlaw added 15 for the Magic, who won despite shooting only 42 per cent from the field.

Washington played without leading scorer Chris Webber, who missed the game with a shoulder injury. Juwan Howard, the Wizards' second-leading scorer, left the game with a sprained ankle with 6:48 left in the first quarter and didn't return.

**Atlanta Hawks 108, Cleveland Cavaliers 94:** At Cleveland, Tyrone Corbin scored 23 points and Atlanta outscored Cleveland by 34 points at the foul line.

Christian Laettner and Steve Smith each scored 18 points and Mookie Blaylock added 17 for Atlanta, which broke a two-game losing streak.

**Detroit Pistons 104, Houston Rockets 92:** In the Detroit Suburb of Auburn Hills, Joe Dumars scored eight of his 16

points down the stretch and the Detroit Pistons held Houston to only four baskets in the fourth quarter to win their first game under interim coach Alvin Gentry.

Charles Barkley scored 26 points for the Rockets. Hakeem Olajuwon, in his second game since coming back from arthroscopic surgery on his left knee, scored 19 points in 26 minutes for Houston.

**Miami Heat 91, Milwaukee Bucks 87:** At Milwaukee, Jamal Mashburn scored 25 points and Dan Majerle hit a pair of 3-pointers in the final two minutes as Miami snapped Milwaukee's six-game winning streak.

Bucks point guard Terrell Brandon re-injured his left ankle in the first quarter and was carried off the court.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Two champions contest vacant title

**BERLIN (AFP)** — Two veteran former world champions — Germany's Graciano Rocchigiani and American Michael Nunn — will contest the vacant WBC light-heavyweight title here on Saturday night. Nunn, 34, a professional for 13 years and a two-time world title holder, and 33-year-old Rocchigiani will fight for the title that has been vacated by American Roy Jones. Nunn has a professional record of 52 wins in 55 fights, while former IBF title holder Rocchigiani has a 39-4-1 record.

### Speed signs for Newcastle

**NEWCASTLE (AFP)** — English Premiership side Newcastle United on Friday completed the signing of Everton midfielder Gary Speed for a reported £5.5 million. Welsh international Speed may make his debut for his new club in the Magpies' Premiership game at St James' Park against West Ham on Saturday. The 28-year-old former Leeds United star is the fourth Newcastle signing in the last 10 days as United manager Kenny Dalglish quickly reinforces his squad for an assault on both the FA Cup and clinching a place in Europe next season.

### Samaranch calls for S. African bid

**NAGANO (AFP)** — South Africa was told on Friday to try again for the Olympics. Cape Town failed in its bid last September for the 2004 Summer Games which were awarded to Athens. International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch said Friday there was no rule about rotating the Games between continents but agreed Africa had a strong case. "But we would be very pleased to see South Africa bidding again. There are other cities apart from Cape Town who might be interested," he said. Africa has yet to hold an Olympics, however, IOC member for South Africa Sam Rainsamy said this week they might bid to stage the 2006 World soccer Cup. Samaranch agreed it might be difficult for South Africa to stage both events. South Africa have already won the backing of Joao Havelange, the outgoing president of FIFA, soccer's world governing body, although Germany and England are the front-runners for the 2006 World Cup.

### Athlete banned from opening

**NAGANO (AFP)** — American bobsleigh competitor Mike Dionne will not be allowed to take part in Saturday's Nagano Olympics opening ceremony, but his appeal against a drug failure could still get him back into the Games. U.S. Olympic Committee executive director Dick Schultz said Friday that a hearing with the Court of Arbitration for Sport had been set for Saturday.

## Hingis sets up rematch against Majoli

**TOKYO (AFP)** — World No. 1 Martina Hingis shook off a challenge from Rita Grande on Friday and set up a semi-final match against Iva Majoli at the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament.

The Swiss teenager, still suffering from a cold she picked up a week ago during her Australian Open triumph, faced seven break points on her serve and wasted two match points before beating the Italian 6-2, 7-5.

French Open champion Majoli, the champion here in 1996 and seeded fourth, never faced a serious crisis and put an end to Japanese wild card entrant Miho Saeki's run with a 6-2, 6-1 win.

Atlanta Olympic gold medalist Lindsay Davenport of the United States and Amanda Coetzer of South Africa completed the semi-final line-up, underlining the rankings with all the top four seeds advancing to the semi-finals.

Davenport, second seed, edged past Irina Spirlea of Romania 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5), while third-seeded Coetzer eliminated the final local hope, Ai Sugiyama, 6-3, 2-6, 6-2.

"I always have a day that doesn't fit ... and probably it was today," said Hingis, who became the youngest player to successfully defend a Grand Slam title in last week's Australian Open in Melbourne.

"I was very tense out there, I just wanted to hit the ball very hard, and I wasn't patient enough. But it's still better not to play well and win than play good and lose," added the top-seeded defending champion.

The semi-final match against Majoli will be their first encounter since Hingis lost to her in the French Open final in June — the only Grand Slam title she missed last season.

"I'm sure it'll be a big, exciting match," Majoli said.

"I played Martina once on this surface and it was a good match, also. I like this surface, it's very fast and I think for my game it's very good. I have a good serve and try to play fast."

"Of course Martina is playing great tennis, but I'm gonna be out there and give my best. We'll see how it's going to work tomorrow," added Majoli, who defeated Hingis in three sets on her way to winning the 1996 title here.

Coetzer used her deep service returns and groundstrokes to pin Sugiyama to the baseline in the final set and after saving one break point at 1-2, she stormed to take the next five games in a row.

"I just tried to forget about the second set. I had a few bad games in the second set," said Coetzer.

"I just really tried to focus on a basic to get back to what I know I have to do, and I just tried to really compete hard and concentrate on every point," she added.

### Nagano Games schedule for Feb. 7 & 8 (all times GMT)

Saturday, February 7	
Opening Ceremony: Central Square	Alpine skiing: (Happo-one Hakuba): Men's downhill 0115
Nagano 0300	Ice hockey-women (Aqua Wing Nagano): Sweden v Finland 0300, Canada v Japan 0700, China v USA 1100
Ice Hockey-men: Italy v Kazakhstan (Group A) Big Hat Nagano 0700, Australia v Slovakia (A) Aqua Wing Nagano 0700, Germany v Japan (B) Big Hat Nagano 1100, France v Belarus (B) Aqua Wing Nagano 1100	Nordic skiing (Kamishiro Hakuba): Women's 15km classic 0900
	Ice hockey-men (Big Hat Nagano): Austria v Kazakhstan (A) 0500, Slovakia v Italy (A) 0900
Sunday, February 8	
Freestyle skiing: (Iizuma Kogen): Preliminary moguls 0030	Luge (Iizuma Kogen): Men's solo 0500
Snowboard (Shiga Kogen Yamanouchi): Men's giant slalom 0030 and 0400	Speed skating (M-Wave Nagano): Men's 5,000m 0600
	Figure skating (White Ring Nagano): Pairs short program 1100

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### Land Rover Journeys Into Cyberspace

LAND ROVER has taken the ultimate off-road trip — into Cyberspace. With the official launch of the rugged four-wheel drive's very own Internet site by British vehicle manufacturer Rover Group, Land Rover's Range Rover, Discovery and Defender brands can now be found on computer screens in homes across the Middle East.

The Land Rover web site — [landrover.com](http://landrover.com) — is one of three new Global Brand Sites launched by Rover Group. The site, along with [rovercars.com](http://rovercars.com) and [mg-cars.com](http://mg-cars.com), combines with a fourth Group site — [rovergroup.com](http://rovergroup.com) — to give a comprehensive insight into the company's activities and the latest information about its brands and products.

Ken James, Regional Director for Rover International, said: "The new Rover Group Internet sites are designed to complement rather than replace existing channels of communication. Our goal is to create on-line awareness for the brands and to educate customers about the range of products and services on offer."

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## EC chief starts Mideast tour to bolster ties

AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Commission (EC) President Jacques Santer, Friday started a seven-day official tour of the region taking him to Egypt, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, a statement by the EC Delegation in Jordan said Friday.

Mr. Santer's visit, which is his first since his appointment to head the Commission in January 1995, aims at underscoring the importance of the European Union (EU) attaches to the development of good relations with its partners in the region and emphasising the progress achieved within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership launched in the November

1995 Barcelona Conference, said the statement.

It added that the president's visit is also geared towards reaffirming the EU's resolve to work alongside the parties involved in pushing the Middle East peace process forward.

The statement said that the president, who will arrive in Jordan on the 10th of this month, will review the state of bilateral relations between the EU and the countries he will visit, all of which have either concluded Euro-Mediterranean association agreements, or are in the negotiation process.

The countries which concluded association agreements with the EU include Jordan,

Israel, the Palestinian National Authority, Morocco and Tunisia.

Similar agreements are being negotiated with Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Algeria.

The countries on the president's itinerary have received 4.6 billion ECUs (about \$5 billion) from the MEDA programme — a financial aid package — in 1995-1999 to assist the 12 Mediterranean signatories to the Barcelona Declaration, the statement said.

It added that the EU is also the largest financial contributor to the Middle East Peace Process, providing a total of about 1.6 billion ECUs (about \$1.76 billion) in grants and loans since 1993.

## Arafat, Kok affirm European role in Mideast peace talks

THE HAGUE (R) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok said on Thursday Europe must continue to play a complementary role alongside Washington in trying to revive the stalled Middle East peace process.

Mr. Arafat held two hours of talks with Mr. Kok and Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo, arriving in The Netherlands after two days of talks with Spanish political leaders.

Mr. Kok said the lack of progress in the peace process was "disappointing and frustrating" and that Europe must

cooperate closely with the United States to seek ways to clear the logjam.

"Everybody knows the United States has to play a key role there, but the European Union is present and has to be present both in the political and economic fields," Mr. Kok told reporters.

Mr. Arafat said he had briefed Mr. Kok and Mr. Van Mierlo on his visit to Washington last month and his talks with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright last weekend.

"We are in need as usual of a European role to protect the peace process, side by side

with the Americans and with the others," he told reporters.

Middle East peace negotiations have been blocked for almost a year, with the two sides currently deadlocked over the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank and Palestinian measures to improve security.

The two sides accuse each other of failing to fulfil agreements brokered by the United States.

Palestinians have long sought a higher profile for Europe in the peace process to balance what some see as a pro-Israel bias in Washington, the chief mediator in the talks.

## Netanyahu points finger at 'Iranian threat,' reiterates 'Israel's right' to retaliate if attacked

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Friday for urgent world action to halt Iranian efforts to develop arms of mass destruction, saying Iran posed as great a threat to peace as Iraq.

Speaking to foreign ambassadors posted to Israel, Mr. Netanyahu said that while world attention was focused on Iraq's suspected development of non-conventional weapons, "there has been very little attention at all given to threats of at least a similar magnitude, taking place in Iran."

"Iran is not subject to [U.N. inspections], Iran is not subject to the threat of sanctions, and therefore programmes to develop ballistic missiles and non-conventional weapons can actually proceed unimpeded," Mr. Netanyahu said.

Mr. Netanyahu noted that seven years after its defeat in the Gulf war, Iraq has been severely weakened militarily by U.N. sanctions and arms inspections but can still pose a threat to surrounding nations.

"It doesn't take a great deal of imagination to understand what would happen if Iran, which has proceeded unimpeded and developed these deadly capabilities" uses its weapons, said Mr. Netanyahu.

"If Iran continues to develop with great application of resources and energy the capability to project power and

deadly weapons of mass destruction beyond its immediate border, this will have enormous consequences throughout the world," he added.

"We urge all the governments of the world to consider the actions necessary to prevent an equal crisis or even a greater crisis from taking place in the future" with Iran, he told the group, which included U.S. and European envoys.

Israel, backed by the United States, has for years waged a campaign to alert world opinion to Iran's suspected development of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and the long-range missiles capable of delivering them anywhere in the Middle East and as far as Europe.

Mr. Netanyahu on Friday welcomed assurances by China that it had halted all technical cooperation with Iran which could help it develop such weapons.

He said Israel was waiting to see if similar assurances by Russia were true.

Mr. Netanyahu also reaffirmed that Israel reserved the right to retaliate if attacked by Iraqi missiles in the building crisis over U.N. arms inspections.

"We reserve the right of self-defence, which is a natural right of any state, any nation, under potential or real attack," Mr. Netanyahu told foreign ambassadors posted in Israel.

"It is our assessment that the risk of Iraqi attack on Israel is low, is very low. But it is our responsibility to protect the people of Israel and to take all the measures of civil defence that are necessary," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu was speaking after U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen said Wednesday that the United States "very strongly urge the Israelis not to get involved even if attacked" by Iraq.

Washington has threatened a "substantial" strike against Iraq if Baghdad persists in barring U.N. inspectors from sites suspected of hiding banned missiles or chemical and biological weapons.

During the 1991 Gulf war, Israel bowed to a U.S. request not to retaliate when Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles at Israel.

Washington feared Israeli involvement in the war would undermine Arab support for the international alliance which ousted Iraq from Kuwait.

Israel this time has rebuffed Washington, although Mr. Netanyahu stressed in his speech that his government policy towards the current Iraq crisis was one of "restraint and responsibility."

"We are not a part of the conflict, we have no intention to be a part of the conflict," he said.



CRIME AGAINST MANKIND: Members of the Russian Liberal Democratic Party picket the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, to protest about U.S. involvement in the Iraqi crisis, Friday. Some 150 people held a rally attended by their leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The slogans read: 'The blockade of Iraq is a crime against mankind. The Liberal Democratic Party firmly supports the just cause of Iraq.' (AP photo)

## Euro-MPs set to start dialogue over Algerian massacres

BRUSSELS (AFP) — A delegation from the European Parliament will visit Algeria starting Sunday in the latest attempt to cast some light on the conflict that has left tens of thousands dead since the start of a bloody civil war in 1992.

The visit of the nine-member group of MEPs follows the failure last month of an attempt by EU governments to persuade the Algerian government to open a dialogue on how to stem the bloodshed or even to accept humanitarian aid for the victims of the recent wave of massacres.

French MEP Andre Soulier, the delegation leader, said the group would be seeking to establish contact with as many representatives of Algerian civil society as possible.

But he played down any suggestion that the mission would seek to probe the circum-

stances surrounding the killings in the light of growing demands for an international inquiry into who is responsible for them.

"This is a parliamentary delegation, not an inquiry or an investigation," Mr. Soulier told AFP. "Our goal is to get people talking and listening to each other."

Frustrated by the Algerian government's hostility to any perceived interference in its internal affairs, EU foreign ministers last month backed calls for U.N. representatives to be allowed to visit the country.

As well as meeting members of the two parties represented in Algeria's parliament, the delegation will meet human rights and women's groups, journalists, lawyers and relations of some of the victims of the massacres.

But the Algerian government has so far rejected a request for the delegation to be allowed to lay a wreath to the victims of the massacres or visit one of the many villages that have been decimated by the attacks.

Certain members of the delegation, including German Green MEP Daniel Cohn-Bendit, have hinted the mission will leave early in protest if it is denied the right to make some sort of symbolic gesture of solidarity with the Algerian people.

"We are due to come back on Thursday but if the authorities insist on too much baby-sitting it could be earlier," he said.

As they have no diplomatic constraints, the MEPs believe they can deliver a franker message to Algeria's military-backed rulers than the troika of EU ministers that spent less than 24 hours in Algiers last

month.

"The Algerian government need have no fear of interference from us. We simply do not have the means," said Mr. Soulier.

Diplomats in Brussels expressed hope that the visit could lead to a breakthrough in relations by helping overcome the Algerian government's suspicion that international offers of support mask an attempt to hold it responsible for the killings.

Organisations like Amnesty International believe the government of Algerian President Liamine Zouhal has been guilty, at the least, of failing to ensure that army units deployed near the site of massacres intervene to stop the killings.

## Clinton secretary retrieved gifts given to Lewinsky — report

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton's personal secretary retrieved gifts including a dress, a brooch and a hat pin that Mr. Clinton had given former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, the New York Times said Friday.

Betty Currie said she retrieved the gifts after it became clear that Ms. Lewinsky was being investigated for an alleged 18-month affair with Mr. Clinton, lawyers familiar with Ms. Currie's account told the daily. The gifts, Ms. Currie believed correctly, could be used as evidence in the investigation. Mr. Starr, in fact, has subpoenaed all such material.

In her testimony last month before investigators working for independent counsel Kenneth Starr, Ms. Currie said the president and Ms. Lewinsky were sometimes alone at the White House, the lawyers said.

In a meeting with Mr. Clinton after her deposition, the sources said, Ms. Currie said the president characterised his relationship with Ms. Lewinsky by asking her a series of leading questions, such as: "We were never alone, right?"

The gifts and Mr. Clinton's behaviour are the focus of a controversial investigation by Mr. Kenneth Starr into allega-

tions that Mr. Clinton had a sexual relationship with Ms. Lewinsky and asked her to lie about it under oath.

Prior reports about the gifts Mr. Clinton gave Ms. Lewinsky during and after her brief stint as White House intern in 1995, only mentioned Tee-shirts and other trinkets of little worth also given other interns.

After leaving the White House for a Pentagon job in the summer of 1996, Ms. Lewinsky visited the presidential mansion 37 times. Her visits were usually cleared by Ms. Currie, who has an office next to Mr. Clinton's.

Ms. Lewinsky and Mr. Clinton have both denied having an affair in separate depositions in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case against the president.

Mr. Starr, in a written statement late Thursday, said he is seeking a "face-to-face interview" with Ms. Lewinsky before granting her immunity from any criminal prosecution.

"In our judgement, we cannot responsibly determine whether she is telling the truth without speaking directly to her," Mr. Starr said in the statement.

"We have found that there is no substitute for looking a witness in the eye, asking detailed questions, matching the

## Lewinsky won't say Clinton urged her to lie

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Monica Lewinsky will not tell investigators that President Bill Clinton urged her to lie under oath about their alleged sexual relationship, even if granted immunity from prosecution. U.S. television networks reported Thursday. Ms. Lewinsky, a 24-year-old former White House intern, is, however, prepared to admit that she had oral sex with Mr. Clinton but did not have sexual intercourse, the reports said. Ms. Lewinsky denied in a sworn affidavit for another case that she had had sexual relations with Mr. Clinton, and the question of whether or not the president urged her to lie about their relationship is at the heart of a scandal engulfing the White House.

answers against verifiable facts, and if appropriate, giving a polygraph test," the statement added.

Ms. Lewinsky's Los Angeles-based attorney, William Ginsburg, could not be reached for comment.

Besides White House officials, logs of Ms. Lewinsky's visits and other documents related to the allegations, Mr. Starr has also subpoenaed television videotapes of Mr. Clinton's visit last March to professional Australian golfer Greg Norman's oceanside estate in West Palm Beach, two local television stations reported.

Apparently, Mr. Starr is looking for images of Mr. Clinton and Ms. Lewinsky together during the trip. One station says

Ms. Lewinsky is nowhere to be seen on its television footage, while the other is still in the process of reviewing its tapes.

Mr. Clinton's visit became world news when he injured a tendon in his knee after stumbling at Mr. Norman's home.

Mr. Norman Friday angrily dismissed claims he was implicated in the presidential sex scandal and staunchly defended his friend Mr. Clinton.

Speaking at his own golf tournament in Sydney, Mr. Norman emphatically denied that Ms. Lewinsky had ever visited his home and said he had never seen her. "I think it's really sad... I don't think anyone should go through this," Mr. Norman said of the allegations levelled at Mr. Clinton.

## White House lawyers unhappy with porn website 'whitehouse.com'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — White House lawyers are demanding that the creator of a pornographic website "whitehouse.com" stop using the name of the presidential residence, administration officials said Thursday. The website — just three letters away from the genuine Internet address of "whitehouse.gov" — downloads a graphic of a pair of men's briefs illustrated with the White House and altered photos of President Bill Clinton and wife Hillary in semi-nude poses. White House attorney Charles Ruff has sent a stern letter to the website operators warning them to drop the references to the First Couple and change its name forthwith.

## Animals mock corruption in Colombian congress

BOGOTA (R) — The monkey went to the senate, and so did the elephant, the lizard, the road, the rat and the rabbit, in a confessedly "flippant" protest against legislative corruption. Actors dressed as the animals, which symbolise venality, scheming and sleaze in political folklore, were shepherded into Colombia's senate by Noemi Sanin, a former foreign minister now running as an independent candidate for president. Sanin told reporters the protest was intended to convince Colombians to "vote responsibly" and help clean up congress by getting rid of some of the country's more notoriously corrupt lawmakers in elections set for next month.

## Pensioners finally make it to altar, 58 years late

LONDON (AFP) — British pensioners and teenage sweethearts Stan Stanton and Stella Robinson are to marry today — 58 years and three marriages after they first became engaged. The couple, both 78, met at a cricket match in 1940 but Stan was called up for war service in the Middle East before they could marry. He spent four years as a prisoner of war — and when he returned found that Stella had married. When Stella's second husband died recently, her sister gave her Stan's address in Canada where he had emigrated with his wife, who died last year. Stella visited him in Canada and Stan, who has carried a photograph of Stella in his wallet since 1940, proposed. He said: "In my heart I knew we would end up together."

## For a son, whistle during sex, Irish myths say

DUBLIN (R) — If you want a son, make love whistling or wearing a hat backwards. If your child needs protecting from evil spirits, spit on it or anoint it with old urine. These were some of the superstitions common in Ireland up to just 40 years ago and published in an academic paper by Padraig O Heala, a lecturer in Irish folklore at the Western Irish University of Galway. Other old wives' tales said if an object was thrown to a pregnant woman, the child would be born with a birthmark of the same shape, or if a hare was brought into the house of a pregnant woman, the child risked being born with a twisted lip.

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## Sarah Netanyahu's marriage secrets go before court

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli court is to pore over private letters from Israeli First Lady Sarah Netanyahu's first marriage to decide whether her ex-husband can use them in a tell-tale memoir, court officials said Friday. Despite fierce opposition from Mrs. Netanyahu, the third wife of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the court in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat Gan decided Thursday to examine the contentious documents. The embarrassing documents

include a 93-page letter written by Mrs. Netanyahu to ex-husband Doron Neuberger's parents as the couple's marriage was collapsing.

After dissecting the contents of the letters in the strictest privacy, the court will decide whether Mr. Neuberger can include them in his book.

While the decision is pending, the court has banned Mr. Neuberger from publishing any material about his ex-wife which could damage her reputation or privacy.

Mr. Neuberger, 38, was married to ex-air stewardess Mrs. Netanyahu for eight years. They divorced in 1987.

Mrs. Netanyahu's private life has been a regular feature in Israel's scandal-hungry newspapers since her new husband was elected prime minister in May 1996.

The media has painted her as being unstable, fiercely jealous and tyrannical with the servants.